MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL IMPOSITIONS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTERSECTION OF MEDIA AFFORDANCES AND CULTURALLY BASED COMMUNICATION STYLES

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MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL IMPOSITIONS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTERSECTION OF MEDIA AFFORDANCES AND CULTURALLY BASED COMMUNICATION STYLES

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Studies examining how culture shapes CMC usage patterns have become increasingly prominent. These studies consistently show that differences exist, but no clear, underlying explanation has been offered which can account for results across studies. Such a predictive pattern is needed in order to work toward understanding, and overcoming, difficulties in cross-cultural CMC-based collaborations on more than a case-by-case basis. In this thesis, I first use interviews to call out areas of collaboration which are particularly challenging to members of different cultures. I then utilize a vignette survey study to evaluate how one particular challenge , imposition management, which incorporates both media and culturally-bound variability, may be viewed.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Leslie Detwiler Setlock was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which will always be home to her. Following graduation from Earlham College in 1995, Leslie took a job working as a provider for a Children Youth & Families organization where her duties included, among other things, helping youth in the foster care system find their voice via college applications, job interviews, etc. It was in this job that Leslie realized how some of the most valuable stories and experiences can be "lost in translation" in specific discourse communities, a thread which has guided her academic journey.

Leslie returned to academia as both the lab manager for and a graduate student of Dr. Susan Fussell, earning her MA in Rhetoric from Carnegie Mellon University and following Dr. Fussell to Cornell University to pursue her Ph.D. Following receipt of her doctorate, Leslie hopes to return to continue to support diverse communities as they learn to hear each other's stories.

For my husband, Christopher, and my children; Aidan, Lila, and Sylvia,

for their belief and patience

For a village of family and friends surrounding me

For my late father-in-law, Joseph James Setlock, for making me promise to finish

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Last, but certainly not least, I need to thank my husband, Chris, and my parents, John and Claudia Detwiler, for trusting in my own pace, and for my personal cheerleaders, Aidan, Lila, and Sylvie, who I hope will take away from this that there are many paths to get where you want to go.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS vii
LIST OF FIGURES ix
LIST OF TABLES x
Chapter 1 Introduction 1
Proposal Overview: Prior Work 4
The Current Study 5
Contributions 6
Outline 6
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature 7
Computer-Mediated Communication 8
Affordances of Media 8
Grounding 9
Cultural Dimensions 10
Individualism and Collectivism 11
Low and High Context 11
Task and Relationship Focus 12
Politeness and Face Management 13
The Intersection of Cultural Dimensions and CMC 14
Affordances across Cultures 15
Grounding across Cultures 18
Chapter 3 A Self-presentation Model 21
Richness and Impression Management 21
Factors Influencing the Impact of Impression Management 22
Factors influencing Self-Presentation Priorities 25
Self-Presentation as an Alternative to the Presumed Goal of Efficiency 27
Chapter 4 Study 1 - An Interview Study of Perceived Affordances of Common Media 31
Method 32
Participants 32
Protocol 33

Analysis 34
Cultural Context 35
Fluency 35
Affordances for Social Interaction 36
Preference 36
Results 36
Cultural Context 37
Fluency 40
Affordances for Social Interaction 42
Preference 45
Discussion 47
Chapter 5 Study 2 - A Survey Study of Imposition Vignettes 50
Method 53
Participants 54
Materials 55
Results 56
Level of Imposition 57
Appropriateness of Media 58
Discussion 62
Chapter 6 Revisiting O'Sullivan's Impression Management model 64
Factors influencing the perceived Locus and Valence of a Face Threat 64
Factors influencing the Perceived Need for Interactional Control 65
Factors influencing the Perceived Symbolic Meaning of an Interaction 66
Social Skills and Culture 67
Limitations and Future Directions 67
Chapter 7 Conclusions 69
Appendix a: Interview protocol for study 1 72
Appendix b: Survey for study 2 74
References 90

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Word counts across tasks……..…….……..17

Figure 2: Imposition decision path……...51

Figure 3: An example of the types of vignettes presented ……..…….…….55

Figure 4: Level of imposition by status, culture and type…….……58

Figure 5: Distribution of highest preference after face-to-face…….....61

Figure 6: Imposition decision path (revisited)…….…70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Affordances of Media, adapted from Clark & Brennan 1991……..……...9

Table 2. Hypothetical scenarios used in interviews……...34

Table 3: Interview Coding Scheme…….……...35

Table 4: Means of First Choice Preference of Media Type……..…….59

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rapid increases in the usability, affordability and saturation of computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies have changed the landscape of human interactions. Through CMC, corporations can access knowledge and skills of people around the world, schoolchildren can learn about other places and cultures through real-time communication with peers abroad, and we can even socialize or play a game with strangers on the other side of the planet. These new types of relationships bring a wealth of opportunity for interacting and working with people from different cultures even in the absence of international travel.

With the increasing globalization of communication and collaboration has come increasing opportunities for communicating with people from different cultures. Teams which include members from a variety of cultures experience numerous benefits in terms of performance, such as increased creativity and a broader scope of ideas (e.g., Adler, 1986; Shin & Zhou, 2007; Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen, 2010; Stahl, Minska, Lee, & De Luque, 2017; Thomas, 1999). They do, however, face many challenges due to that same diversity (Shachaf, 2008; Stahl et al., 2010). In some cases, this involves communicating across language barriers, where issues directly related to fluency come into play (Doryei & Scott, 1997; Gao, Xu, Hau, Yao, Cosley, & Fussell, 2015). However, even when speakers have a language in common, these interactions often face problems arising from cultural differences in communication styles, task orientation, power structures, and a host of other factors (e.g., Adair & Brett, 2005; Crampton & Hinds, 2007; Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). In addition, people within multi-cultural organizations still tend to group with like-culture individuals, which may limit their access to the

full benefits of diversity (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; State, Park, Weber, & Macy, 2015; Yuan, Setlock, Cosley, & Fussell, 2013)

Attention to intercultural challenges and cultural diversity in the fields of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Computer-supported Collaborative Work (CSCW) has increased in recent years, leading to workshops, tracks and conference sections with this focus [see CABS (Collaboration Across Boundaries) 2014, formerly IWIC (International Workshop on Intercultural Collaboration) 2007 & 2009 and ICIC (International Conference on Intercultural Collaboration) 2010 & 2012, for examples]. This increase reflects researchers' growing appreciation that, with distance, comes a greater chance of collaborating with people from sometimes dramatically different cultures. Investigators have conducted controlled laboratory studies comparing intracultural and intercultural CMC (e.g., Diamant, Fussell, & Lo, 2008; Setlock, Fussell, & Neuwirth, 2004), field studies of communication in international organizations (e.g., Crampton and Hinds, 2007), surveys of media use in different countries (e.g., Kayan, Fussell, & Setlock, 2006) and ethnographic analyses of culturally diverse organizations (e.g., Lindtner, Nardi, Wang, Mainwaring, Jing & Liang, 2008).

Case studies vary so widely in terms of the dynamics and socio-cultural environment of the group that it is challenging to pinpoint either the sources of differences or of the successes. Some groups are more similar than others in language, culture, etc. than others, while still being "cross cultural." For instance, in Veinott, Olson, Olson, & Fu (1999), participants were identified as native English speakers or non-native English speakers. However, if the non-native English speakers were from other Western cultures (such as Germany) they would be expected to have more similar communication styles with their English-speaking partner than if they were from an Asian culture (such as China.)

Many studies to date use fairly concrete tasks, such as navigating a map from one point to another (Diamant et al., 2008), ranking items in a survival task (Bazarova & Yuan, 2013; Setlock, 2004, 2007) or utilizing an online scheduling tool (Reinecke, Ngyugen, Bernstein, Naef, & Gajos, 2013) which are believed to be unequivocal and clearly defined in terms of the goal. Nouri, Erez, Rockstuhl, Ang, Leshem-Calif, & Rafaeli (2013) found in a review of studies that the nature of the task, whether executive or generative and whether utilizing weak or strong situations (the clarity of the task instructions) played into the impact of culture on an interaction. Similarly, Stahl, Maznevksi, Voigt, & Jonsen (2010) found, in a meta-review, that both the type of diversity and the equivocality of the activity affect the impact of cross-cultural collaboration.

Whether a task is perceived as unequivocal or not may vary across cultures, as the primary role of communication and social interaction can vary (Setlock 2004.) Members of *high context cultures* – cultures which utilize a large amount of contextual information in the production and interpretation of communication - may see a task as involving more factors, and therefore more sources of information, than members of *low context cultures*. Along the same lines, participants in an experiment may perceive multiple "tasks" – or purposes – in a study. The experimental task chosen by the researcher may not always be perceived as the most important priority in an interaction. For instance, high context, highly interdependent cultures such as many Asian cultures may prioritize social or relational goals over the more short term experimental or collaborative task-at-hand. The present study will explore the differences in perceptions which may contribute to whether a computer-mediated cross-cultural communication "works" or does not. Differences relating to the goals, priorities and norms surrounding communication media can have significant impacts. They may affect to what extent people feel an interaction is task- or relationship-oriented, and how they then manage that interaction. Hence, an experiment with a

concrete task, prescribed roles, and a known end-time may be conducted via CMC "successfully" in terms of the outcome measures of that study, masking other, less quantifiable challenges which could impact similar encounters outside of the experimental paradigm.

The goal of the present study is to develop a model which does not stop at the identification of culturally-based problematic mediated communications, but takes the necessary next step of identifying what is shared between the decision patterns. To this end, I have chosen to study intentionally equivocal tasks, such as asking for help or favors, which emphasize social and emotional needs in addition to a concrete goal. Through this work, we can identify areas where both people and technology can effectively work through differences to reap the many benefits of cross-cultural collaboration.

Proposal Overview: Prior Work

My dissertation work is informed by my previous studies exploring how culture impacts CMC communication in the context of distributed collaborations. This work consists of a series of laboratory experiments I performed utilizing various media in same and cross-cultural pairings (see Setlock et al., 2004; Setlock, Quinones, & Fussell, 2007). In laboratory studies (Setlock et al., 2004, 2007), Asian participants engaged in more social conversation than Americans even given a fairly unequivocal task by Western experimental standards.

The experimental task in my prior work (Setlock et al. 2004, 2007), the Desert/Artic Survival Task, asked participants to envision themselves in a disaster and to rank a list of items in terms of importance to salvage from their vehicle. This negotiation task was illuminating, as we learned that the Asian and American participants behaved differently, even when replicated to control for language (Setlock, Fussell, & Shih, 2006).

We found that the Asian participants engaged in a greater degree of personal story-telling, talking about how an item could be used, might be used, what sort of purpose it could have in the "story" of their survival or anecdotally in their real lives (Setlock et al. 2004, 2006). Building rapport as a team (pair) seemed important. The American participants, however, frequented traded, or negotiated, ranks with each other, such as agreeing on a rank of "4" when one person suggested "2" and the other suggested "6". The apparent goal for American pairs was efficiency. This series of experiments prompted the research question of whether the standard measure of "efficiency" as a proxy for good CMC communication (Clark & Brennan, 1991) was applicable across cultures.

The Current Study

My dissertation consists of two studies which explore the relationship between several spaces where Asian and American cultures tend to differ, specifically issues relating to status differentials and the evaluation of the necessity and/or appropriateness of a potentially face-threatening interaction. In the first study, I utilize interviews to explore how individuals from different cultures use computer-mediated communication technologies, and for what sorts of interactions. These interviews ask how people typically talk to their friends, family, colleagues, and how they would choose to communicate various information, such as personal struggles (death in the family, etc), requests, or general updates and socializing.

Based on the themes which emerged from my interview studies, I created vignettes to assess how situational factors elicit culturally-divergent preferences and perceptions regarding specific CMC technologies. In this study, I focus on the act of one person making an imposition on another. An imposition occurs wherever one person makes a request with awareness that it may impact another's autonomy (Flynn & Bohns, 2008) I chose to focus on impositions because

they combine several sensitive themes which emerged from the interviews, such as politeness, face management and possibly conflicting needs and goals, as well as concerns which might arise from intercultural interactions, such as confidence in shared norms.

Contributions

This study advances theory by refining existing knowledge about how culture influences perceptions of media appropriateness, when a situation renders the use of CMC acceptable even for socially complex interactions, and with whom. Prior research has shown that people from different cultures perceive media differently, but the specifics of this variation – as well as the contexts in which it appears – are unclear. This study explores how participants percieve the qualities of different media, in the sort of socially complex situations which come up often in intercultural collaborations. Understanding why people are choosing certain media can lead to more sympathetic cross-cultural interactions as well as informing CMC technologies which allow for more fluid use of various features.

Outline

In the remainder of this dissertation, I will present the background literature on: the topics of cross-cultural communication (CMC) with a focus on affordances and grounding, the primary frameworks used to discuss cultural variation, and the points of intersection between these (Chapter 2); O'Sullivan's (2000) model of Impression Management and discuss the relevance of affordances for regulating and controlling information as well as conveying it (Chapter 3); Study 1, an interview study on self-reported uses of various CMC technologies (Chapter 4); Study 2, a survey study on perceived appropriateness of CMC technologies for making impositions (Chapter 5); and, utilizing the structure of the Impression Management model, discuss the conclusions from both studies (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The goal of this thesis is to explore, and hopefully find some order surrounding, the complexities of how cultural variations in communication needs and styles and perceptions of the affordances of computer mediated communication (CMC) technology. Computer-mediated technologies have historically been thought of in terms of the affordances they provide, or what they can allow the user to do: such as the ability to see each other, to hear each other, to revise or preserve content, or to respond synchronously (Gibson, 1977) or in terms of the "richness" of the communication they afford. Cultures have traditionally been described in terms similar to "richness" in the sense of the amount of situational and social context they use to make sense of (Hall, 1976) as well as the degree of interdependence in their social structures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and how these traits and others are reflected in communication styles.

There are several points of intersection between the ways we discuss CMC and culture. Both CMC and culture (Chua, Boland & Nisbett, 2005; Masuda, 2009; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001) vary along the lines of the extent to which context – the details of the space, timing, participants, etc. - is employed and/or used in interpreting a situation. Depending on the perceived nature of the interaction, these attributes may be of high importance. Face management, including the importance and operationalization of "politeness," is a topic which is seen in all cultures although the specifics of how, when and why it comes up is very much grounded in cultural values and in the perceived necessity of engaging in that work (Holtgraves, 1992).

Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) refers broadly to the use of technologies to facilitate human interaction through some combination of text, audio, or video. Research on how people use CMC, for what purposes and with what degree of effectiveness, generally focuses on the perceived affordances of the media, or what people see that media, or that trait of media, as facilitating for them (Gibson, 1977). One way of gauging the usefulness of the media, in terms of effective communication, is in terms of how well users can ground their conversation, or establish what is shared knowledge adequately to build on it (Clark & Brennan, 1991).

Affordances of Media

Years of research have led to a number of well-developed theories that can be used to describe how well media supports communication. (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Daft & Lengel, 1984; Postmes, Spears & Lea, 2002; Walther, 1992). For example, Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976) describes mediated communication along a continuum of social presence – or how much awareness the participants have of each other as being "present" – with face-to-face communication as the benchmark for highest presence – with the premise that certain goals demand more presence than others to be effective such as giving constructive professional feedback (Walter, Ortbach, & Niehaves, 2015) or self-disclosure (Ruppel, Gross, Stoll, Peck, Allen & Kim, 2017.)

Daft & Lengel (1984) employ Media Richness Theory to juxtapose the richness of the medium – or the degree to which the medium can convey contextual or sensory information – and the equivocality of the message to to be convey – or how much room for misunderstanding or misinterpreting the message there is. Richer media are thought to be more necessary for highly equivocal messages to be conveyed effectively, such as responding to a disaster (Liu, Fraustino,

& Jin, 2016) or rallying support for a new idea at work (Rice, D'Ambra, & More, 1998.) The features of media which convey this information are described as the affordances of the medium (Gibson, 1977).

Clark and Brennan (1991) proposed that different features or affordances of media (e.g., text vs. speech, visibility of a partner) change the costs of effective communication, including the time available to plan an utterance, the evidence from which speakers can infer a listener's state of understanding, or the listener's ability to provide feedback. Table 1 summarizes the affordances of face-to-face interaction, video conferencing, audio conferencing, and instant messaging for conversational grounding.

	Communication Media			
Content	Face to face	Video	Audio	IM
Verbal content	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intonation and inflection	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Facial expression and gaze	Yes	Yes	No	No
Body language and immediate environment	Yes	No	No	No

Table 1. Affordances of Media, adapted from Clark & Brennan 1991

Grounding

The term grounding refers to the interactive process by which communicators exchange evidence in order to reach mutual understanding (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Speakers and listeners work together through processes such as clarification, elaboration and repair of errors to ensure that messages are understood as they were intended.

Among Western speakers, the extent of effort put into the grounding process is predictive of how much information is successfully conveyed from speaker to listener (Li, 1999; Monk, 2003).

A number of studies have shown that the affordances of computer-mediated communication affects the grounding process. For example, for tasks involving physical objects, conversation is more efficient when people share a view of the workspace than when they converse via phone or IM alone (e.g., Fussell, Setlock & Kraut, 2003; Gergle, Kraut & Fussell, 2004; Gergle, Millen, Kraut & Fussell, 2004; Kraut, Fussell & Siegel, 2003; etc.). For tasks that are discussion-oriented, participants use more formal turn-taking processes in both audio and video-conferencing (e.g., Doherty-Sneddon et al., 1997; Sellen, 1992). The presence of explicit coordination devices also aids grounding (Hancock & Dunham, 2001), as does the ability to gesture in a shared workspace (Fussell et al., 2004).

CMC users alter their communication strategies based on the affordances available to them, in order to ground their utterances (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Fussell et al., 2004; Gergle, Kraut & Fussell, 2004; Kraut et al., 2003). For example, face-to-face settings afford visibility and physical co-presence, so speakers can use gestures and deictic expressions such as this one to refer efficiently to objects and people in the environment. On the telephone or over instant messaging (IM), media that lack visibility and physical co-presence, speakers must use lengthier verbal descriptions of the same objects (e.g., Doherty-Sneddon et al., 1997; Kraut et al., 2003).

Cultural Dimensions

There are reasons to believe that what we know from research using Western participants will not generalize straightforwardly to other cultures. Cross-cultural research suggests that societies vary along important dimensions that might influence CMC and collaborative work. For instance, traits such as the extent to which a person priorities their own gain/loss vs that of a

larger collective (a family, village, etc.) or in what situations and to what extent contextual information is valued in a communication are related to the culture in which a person lives and works.

Individualism and Collectivism

For example, theorists have proposed that cultures vary along a dimension of individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede, 1983; Triandis, 1989). Individualist, typically Western, societies are posited to view needs, obligations and rewards as regards the individual whereas collectivistic, typically Eastern, societies stress communal-level needs, obligations and rewards. Markus and Kitayama (1991) identify the related dimension of independent/interdependent perspective, suggesting that people from Western cultures tend to place greater value on freedom from interference and the pursuit of goals important to the self, while people from Eastern cultures view co-participants in actions, including conversation, as naturally and essentially connected, with shared rewards or consequences.

In an individualist culture, for instance, a person is expected and encouraged to do what is best for himself. This would include the US notion of "the self-made man." A person in an individualist culture would take pride in how much they can do for themselves. Similarly, respecting this value in others would involve being aware of imposing upon their autonomy.

Low and High Context

Edward Hall (1976) describes culture as the entire system of communication, including (but not limited to) words, actions, postures, gestures, tones of voice, facial expressions, use of time and space. Hall proposed that cultures vary along a dimension of *low- vs. high context of communication*, reflecting how much contextual information is required for communication. Low context, typically Western, cultures communicate primarily through verbal channels, using

more-or-less literal meanings, whereas in high context, typically Eastern, cultures social and situational information (e.g., nonverbal behavior, interpersonal relationships) factor heavily in the interpretation of the verbal messages.

Task and Relationship Focus

Triandis (1995) argues that cultures vary in terms of task vs. relationship orientation. Task oriented, typically Western, cultures focus conversation on communicating necessary information to accomplish an immediate task, whereas relationship-oriented cultures focus jointly on the short-term, immediate task and also on establishing and reinforcing social dynamics with one's partners. This would suggest that information pertaining to a task would be more crucial to Western interactacts, while information which supports social awareness would benefit Eastern participants more.

One difficulty in applying these dimensions to the informational needs to which they may correspond is the underspecificity of the characterizations. For example, Hall's dimension of high or low context only speaks on a general degree to the importance of situational context in interpretation of an interaction and the related cues. However, so many factors are included under situational context (e.g., relationship between partners, the setting, the task, how long people have known each other, relative status, etc.) that it is difficult to predict how, in any given communicative setting, using any given task, low context and high context cultures will differ in their communication strategies. In a face-to-face scenario, the relative importance of various sources of information depends on the details of a particular configuration of situational constraints, and change through the sequence of the interaction.

Politeness and Face Management

The concept of "face" exists cross-culturally and is a concern in both Western and Eastern communication strategies, although there is long-lasting discussion about whether it means the same thing, or has the same goal, across cultures. Hu (1944) posited that there are two terms for "face" in Chinese culture. The first, "mien," Hu describes as referring to the prestige gained through success. The second, "lien," is described as the honor gained by meeting societal expectations. Hu suggests the former is more important in Chinese culture than in American, although both are present. Erving Goffman (1955, p. 5) described face "as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes." Using this definition, face is a concern in all interactions, although the specifics of the concern and how it is enacted are socially constructed, in accordance with whatever the "approved social attributes" are.

Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) expands on the notion of "face" to include both positive and negative face, with the explanation that positive face refers to the upholding of one's self-image, respect, etc. and negative face refers to the right to an expectation of autonomy. According to Holtgraves (1997, 1992), the concern with face management and politeness is universal, but the weighting of the face management types and needs may differ culturally. Each type of face-threat is expected to correlate to different specific politeness strategies in communication, which would differ along cultural lines in accordance with the priorities of that culture (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Depending on the requirements of the strategy, such as nonverbal communication, posturing, etc., face management strategies may also be better or less well supported by different media technologies. For instance, with strategies with an emphasis on

allowing others to process uncomfortable news privately, media which allow for this may be "most polite," despite – or rather because of – the absence of richness (El-Shinnawy and Markus, 1997; Mentis, Reddy, & Rosson, 2013).

The Intersection of Cultural Dimensions and CMC

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present the theoretical background behind the study of cross-cultural computer-mediated communication - how culture and medium each affect conversational grounding, the role of conversational grounding in face management, and finally the likely difficulties when face management strategies are complicated by the dual effects of intercultural interaction and computer-mediated communication.

In their seminal paper on why, despite technological advances, distance still matters in distributed collaborations, Olson and Olson (2000, p. 169) argued that, "possibly the single biggest factor that global teams need to address is culture differences." The Olsons go on to describe a number of important ways in which cultural differences can impact the success of a collaboration, including differences in conventions, work processes, power relationships, and conversational styles.

For example, an individual from a task-oriented culture such as the United States or Canada may focus exclusively on getting things done, overlooking the social niceties expected by his/her conversational partner from a relationship-focused culture such as China, Japan or Latin America. Similarly, an individual from a low-context communication culture, who relies primarily on verbal language to express his or her thoughts, may ignore facial expressions or tones of voice that are intended to be communicative by his/her partner from a high-context culture.

These three dimensions, - high v. low context, individualism v. collectivism, task v. relationship focus - as well as others proposed in the literature, may interact with features of media to affect CMC. For example, members of high-context cultures that rely heavily on the situational context of communication may be more disadvantaged by leaner media such as Instant Messaging or e-mail than members of low-context cultures. Similarly, to the extent that auditory and visual cues are important for establishing rapport, we might expect the socio-emotional aspects of communication to be more disrupted by the elimination of these cues for members of relationship-oriented cultures than for members of task-oriented cultures.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that, in cross-cultural interactions, the combination of these culturally bound communication traits can impact both the social and task-related effectiveness of the interaction. (e.g., Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Pekerti & Thomas, 2003). These effects on communicative process may influence both objective task outcomes such as performance times and subjective outcomes such as trust or liking for one's partners. Studies have also shown members of distributed teams can, with appropriate support, develop adaptations in their mode of communicating or interacting which help to repair trust (Al-Ani et al., 2012).

Affordances across Cultures

Of particular interest for building theories of culture and CMC is the idea that cultures vary in the quantity and type of information used in effective conversations (e.g., Li, 1999). Hall (1976) proposed that audibility and visibility were more important for grounding in high-context cultures than in low-context cultures, because awareness of how others are reacting to one's messages is an important aspect of high-context communication. This notion is supported indirectly by Veinott et al. (1999), who found that non-native English speakers, many of whom

were Asian, benefited from video over audio conferencing, whereas native English speakers did not. Veinott and colleagues suggest that the richer cues to mutual understanding provided by visibility (e.g., quizzical looks) may be of particular benefit when communicating across cultures.

In addition, cultures may differ in how they assess and reflect agency in conversations. According to Markus et al. (2006), Japanese and American communicators view their own role in events differently. Japanese attribute success to both themselves and their team (social network) while Americans view it as primarily due to internal or personal attributes. This may impact the importance of audio and visual cues, as they would increase the salience of group membership during the communication.

Media differ in terms of the types of information they provide. They can be generally categorized in terms of face-to-face, video-supported, audio-supported and text only. The importance of the various types of information, however, varies depending on the goals of the users. In addition, the media affordances are not linearly related as "more" and "less" since some information is readily communicated by alternate channels, or is typically conveyed by a combination of media, such as nodding while uttering "gotcha," clarifying the feedback's meaning. Neither the nod nor the utterance alone would convey the same message as the combination. Cognitive feedback in Whittaker & O'Conaill (1997) is communicated visually but can also be conveyed auditorily, if visibility were less well supported.

Although research has shown that cultures differ in terms of how they perceive and use affordances, this has not translated into a linear preference for richer media by high-context cultures, or shown that richer media necessarily elicits better results from members of high-context cultures. For instance, Figure 1 shows the comparison in amount of conversation

contributed in a text-only and in a richer media, in two studies. In the Desert Survival Task (Setlock et al., 2004; 2007) the richer condition (face-to-face) seems to encourage more extensive conversation from the Chinese participants. In Wang et al. (2009)'s study, however, Americans spoke more and increased richness (video) seemed to decrease the contributions from Chinese participants. These experiments differ in terms of experimental task. The Desert Survival Task is a negotiation task, while the Brainstorming task encourages the contribution of new and original ideas. These proscribed tasks may be translated into different goals by the participants. Furthermore, there may be a quality specific to face-to-face communication which is different from simply a higher degree of richness.

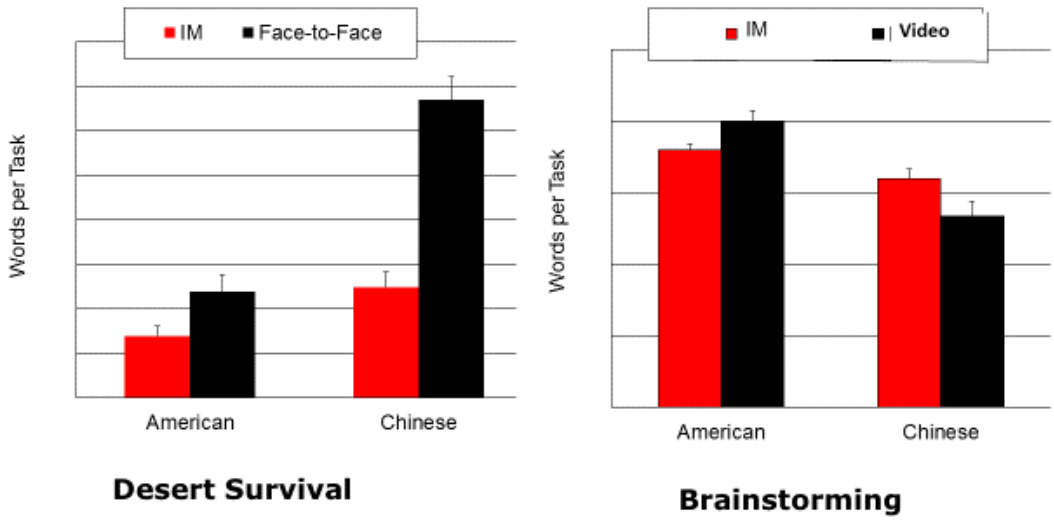

Figure 1. Word counts across tasks. Adapted from Setlock et al., 2007 (left) & Wang et al., 2009 (right)

Traits typical of Asian and American cultures may be affected by features of commonly used communication media. These traits may, however, lead to a heightened awareness of or concern for contextual information, rather than a preference for more or it, regardless of situation. This leads to the question of how culturally bound traits related to contextualization

(high v. low context), communication priority (task v. relationship) and agency (individualism v. collectivism) map onto the perceived affordances of CMC, and whether emphasizing those traits – for instance, triggering a relational need or a situation requiring a high degree of context – will lead to different media preferences across cultures.

Grounding across Cultures

In contrast to the sizeable body of research on the effects of media on conversational grounding, relatively little work has addressed the relationship between culture and grounding (Kashima, 2015; Li, 1999). This is likely due in part to Grounded Theory's origin in Western literature. Even so, given the theory's prominence in communication studies, it is worth extending into the cross-cultural realm. There are two somewhat independent research questions of interest: First, do cultural dimensions such as individualism-collectivism or high-low context of communication affect grounding processes in conversations between members of the same culture? Might, for example, members of high-context cultures draw more heavily on visual cues for grounding than members of low-context cultures? Second, does grounding in cross-cultural pairs unfold differently from grounding among partners who belong to the same culture? One might expect this to be the case when conversations draw heavily on community co-membership for establishing common ground.

Research by Li (1999) has addressed both of these questions. Li examined whether the effort pairs put into ensuring that messages were properly understood differed as a function of whether both members of the pair were born and raised in Canada, both were born and raised in the People's Republic of China, or one was from Canada and one was from China. She found minimal differences between Canadian-born pairs and Chinese-born pairs in terms of the amount of effort spent grounding messages. Curiously, however, the amount of effort a pair expended

was correlated with comprehension of the material the speaker was trying to convey only for the Canadian pairs. Li concludes that although grounding behaviors may be similar in Canadian and Chinese dyads, the purpose of this grounding activity differs. For Chinese dyads, it is associated with relationship-building where as for Canadian dyads it improves information exchange.

Theorists have suggested that grounding in cross-cultural conversations may be especially problematic due to differences in background knowledge (minimal community co-membership) and to differences in conversational styles. Li reports results partially consistent with this hypothesis: cross-cultural pairs in which a Chinese individual was the listener spent less effort ensuring that messages were properly grounded (e.g., requesting clarification, expanding on initial formulations). This same effect was not found when the Canadian individual was the listener. The authors hypothesized differences in the assumptions about communication between the two cultures. Chinese listeners assumed that their job was to draw out the information from their partner. Canadians, coming from a more high-context style, assumed that their partner was already telling them whatever they intended to share.

Although Li found no difference between homogenous Chinese and homogeneous Canadian dyads in terms of grounding and the success of information transmission, her pairs all communicated in face-to-face settings. Furthermore, although she video-taped each session she did not analyze gaze or other nonverbal behaviors. Thus, it is an open question as to whether cultures differ in the extent to which they rely on these nonverbal behaviors in the grounding process. Hall (1976) suggested that they might. According to Hall, high-context cultures place more value on visual and auditory feedback and social cues than do low-context cultures. For members of high-context cultures, then, one would expect the elimination of visual and auditory cues to have negative effects not seen in the prior research on low-context cultures.

Research by Veinott et al. (1999) indirectly supports this view. They compared pairs performing a map task via audio vs. video conferencing. Pairs were either American or of mixed cultural background with at least one member from an Asian country. The results showed that non-native speakers benefited from video whereas native English speakers did not. Veinott et al. suggest that the richer cues to mutual understanding provided by video conferencing (e.g., quizzical looks, halting action, raised eyebrows) were especially helpful to non-native speakers, many of whom were members of Asian cultures. However, because non-native English speakers were always matched with someone from a different culture than their own (i.e., all were in cross-cultural dyads), it is impossible to tell whether the results stem from the culture of the participants or from the cross-cultural setting.

Research to date has focused primarily how whether members of various cultures have the information and context they need to ground utterances. This is not the same as considering how people decide whether and to what extent they need to achieve grounding. It may be that even if grounding well has different requirements across cultures, members of those cultures do not consider all situations to warrant that degree of effort. This leads to the question of how people from different cultures decide where to spend their effort on grounding utterances, based on their perception of the primary goals of the interaction, given the differing extent to which media supports it.

CHAPTER 3

A SELF-PRESENTATION MODEL

The development of communication technologies not only offers us increasing options for how to communication with each other, but also increasing opportunities to study our human communication behaviors. Technologies, with their various affordances and limitations, provide a window into the social and cognitive processes that determine what we say, how we say it, and how we interpret the communication of others.

Richness and Impression Management

Initial work on media affordances was primarily based in the premise that richer media (more cues, more information) could better support social needs (ex – Daft & Lengel, 1984; Daft, Lengel & Trevino, 1987.) O'Sullivan's work offers an early insight into how media may be used to manage the flow of information, and therefore affect impression management, through restricting cues and information in addition to supporting them (O'Sullivan 2000).

O'Sullivan's work on an Impression Management Model of communication technologies provides an invaluable foundation for exploring how self-presentation goals impact media preferences and experiences. In his paper "What You Know Can't Hurt Me" O'Sullivan identifies a process by which speakers assess the self-presentation impact of a given communication and determine the preferred communication media for their message in light of these face management goals. O'Sullivan advances on previous research by moving from a technology-based perspective ("what does technology do to communication?") to a user-based perspective ("what do relational goals do to mediated communication?") This distinction allows him to explore both intended and unintended applications of media affordances.

Relational goals in the context refer to the needs, or desires, of technology users to interact with others in a way consistent with their relationship with that person and their desired self-presentation in that relationship. In this sense, self-presentation serves as a specific goal within the communication. O'Sullivan theorizes that users are aware of how various media can support and constrict access to cues which impact self-presentation, and that this affects media preferences and usage patterns particularly in relationships with a high personal stake (romantic relationships.)

Key to O'Sullivan's contribution is that "what is missing in mediated channels versus face-to-face may not be seen as a problem (at least by the channel selector) but as an opportunity to regulate information between partners as a means of managing self-presentations." Thus, media may be seen as affording regulation even in its inability to afford conveyance of rich cues. Channel selection may be strategically used by individuals as part of self-regulation, or self-presentation, when qualities of the channels are advantageous for a chosen strategy of deception, self-disclosure, etc. For instance, O'Sullivan posits that leaner channels may "ambiguate, or obscure completely, unattractive or embarrassing aspects" while richer media may "clarify attractive aspects" of the self-presentation (p. 408).

Factors Influencing the Impact of Impression Management

Early in any interaction, the communicators make an assessment about whether the proposed interaction poses a potential impact to their own or their partner's self-presentation. The initial stage of this decision is described in terms of the valence of the potential impact (positive or negative) and the locus of the potential impact (self or partner.) O'Sullivan theorized that, where a negatively valenced impact (a threat) to desired self-presentation existed, individuals may prefer use of mediated channels even knowing that face-to-face communication

offered additional opportunities to correct the potential threat. The idea is that mediated channels provide a "buffer effect" which helps protect the threatened party from the full effect of the loss of face. Through mediated channels, each partner can compose their response in private and with at least a few moments to prepare. Shame or guilty feelings may be lessened by the person making the threat, and embarrassment may be lessened on the part of the receiver.

O'Sullivan further hypothesized that the preferred communication channels will be affected by the locus of the impact, whether on the self or the conversational partner. He hypothesized that a speaker is likely to prefer mediated channels during both positively and negatively valenced impacts on self-presentation. In positively valenced episodes, mediated channels allow the speaker some protection if the reaction is less than he would have hoped or is negative (such as jealousy toward an achievement.) In threats to self-presentation, mediated channels allow for a more controlled response.

Three primary skillsets emerge from O'Sullivan's review of the existing (at that time) literature regarding interpersonal communication and communication technologies, which are relevant to the use of channel selection as a part of self-presentation management. These factors are interactional control, knowledge and application of symbolic meaning, and social skills. It is worth explaining these factors here in brief, since several of them will later be discussed in terms of a possible interaction with culturally bound communication norms. In addition, details of these factors may flex somewhat with technological development.

Interaction Control is defined as "constraints that relational partners place on one another that limit appropriate responses" (p.412) For example, the use of highly nuanced facial expressions to convey emotional cues to a response are not facilitated by a text-only media. Even in modern media, with the use of emoticons, the level of detail is of course nowhere near that of

the human face. This could be affected by culture to the extent that the cues conveyed, or desired to be conveyed, might vary between cultures affecting desirable responses.

Symbolic meaning pertains to meaning or impressions relating to the media itself. For instance, email is often thought of as a more "casual" form of communication than a letter mailed to the home or office. Similarly, a telephone call signifies a more personal communication than a form letter. O'Sullivan acknowledges that there is some variability in terms of the symbolic content of a media, therefore the speaker's perception of the meaning is also a consideration. Intrinsic in this, though unstated, is that the speaker's perception of the meaning must also include his expectation of the proposed recipient's perception, as this informs the appropriateness of the channel to his goal. These perceptions may be complicated when the initiator is from a different culture than the recipient, as norms of appropriateness could vary.

Finally, O'Sullivan identifies the *social skills* of the initiator as a factor in effective self-presentation management. "Social skills" in this case does not suggest the colloquial use of the phrase, but awareness of both the relevant factors playing into the interaction and awareness of the costs and benefits of communication media and strategies. In this, O'Sullivan includes a truthful assessment of one's own competency, for example the decision to use letter-writing involves not only an evaluation of the affordances of letter-writing to the average user, but an awareness of whether I convey myself well (or best) in that media. Again, foreshadowing to the discussion of cross-cultural, mediated communication using modern technology, these perceptions may yet be further broken down. Culture may be expected to interact with social skills and perceptions, and fluency may impact communication skills.

Factors influencing Self-Presentation Priorities

Exploring communication technology in terms of media richness allowed researchers to discuss how relational information is conveyed in communication. Taking the premise that face-to-face communication is the richest form of communication, and is also the "original" form of communication, technologically mediated channels were seen as approximations and variations thereof. By removing a type of information, we could investigate what role that type of information had in communication.

O'Sullivan's work is an extension of the same process. By looking at how an individual uses the context provided, we can explore how people process and construct communication. Several factors that go into this construction have been studied in this way since O'Sullivan's paper. Among these are type of relationship (e.g., including level of intimacy, power dynamics, formality of relationship), personal traits (e.g.- shyness, age), media experiences (e.g. – comfort with technologies), and relational goals (e.g.- romantic, longevity, intent to meet, etc.) all of which impact the larger goal of self-presentation by manipulating the real and perceived face management needs of the participants.

In O'Sullivan's study, the participants were involved in a romantic relationship. Davis and Gutwin (2005) explore this aspect of the richness/regulating dynamic by looking at how relationship impacts users' willingness to share information about their activities. They found that relationship did impact such willingness, but not with a consistent pattern about specific relationships. It seemed that the strength of relationship was the only significant factor, with participants being less likely to share information with acquaintances than any other relationship. Interestingly, there was also variation in the rates of sharing by media, which the authors suggested was an artifact of information they believed to be public, already. This would have

implications for self-presentation via media, since both actual access to information and perception of publicness may well change with advances in technology and adoption thereof. It is possible that people put the effort into regulating only what they feel they can regulate, which may change with time and experience.

Research has also looked at patterns of regulating self-presentational information on the individual level. In Hertel et al., (2008) the authors explored shyness as a variable in media preferences. They found that shy individuals preferred email, with the explanation that email offered the greatest opportunity for regulating self-presentation and mediating social anxiety. This effect was heightened with increased likelihood of a difficult, potentially face-threatening social interaction. Again, it is clear that individuals are aware of, and making use of, the ability of media to filter social information. Goffman's concept of "frontstage" and "backstage" may be particularly useful in understanding how the shy individual makes use of the affordances of email (Goffman 1963). For the shy user, email – with its ambiguity of time and limited social cues – offers somewhat of an extended "backstage." The user can both hear and interpret communication privately (including reacting to possibly face-threatening communication) and also compose his own communication privately. This allows for improved self-presentation by affording greater privacy at delicate points in the communication.

Although the above studies occur within Western cultures, they point to some features which can also vary across cultures. For instance, Gutwin's study explored strength of ties as well as comfort with various media. Hertel looked at shyness as a state which makes a user more sensitive to self-presentation concerns. Both of these factors involve traits which can fluctuate between cultures.

Self-Presentation as an Alternative to the Presumed Goal of Efficiency

A number of studies have shown that technological mediation affects the grounding process. Most of this work has assumed that efficiency, or least effort, is a benchmark of "successful" communication. For example, for tasks involving physical objects, conversation is more efficient when people share a view of the workspace than when they converse via phone or IM alone (e.g., Fussell, Setlock & Kraut, 2003; Gergle, Kraut & Fussell, 2004; Gergle, Millen, Kraut & Fussell, 2004; Kraut, Fussell & Siegel, 2003;)

For tasks that are discussion-oriented, participants use more formal turn-taking processes in both audio and video-conferencing (e.g., Doherty-Sneddon et al., 1997; Sellen, 1992). The ability to gesture in a shared workspace also facilitates grounding (Fussell et al., 2004). For members of high-context cultures, then, one would expect the elimination of visual and auditory cues to have negative effects on efficiency and mutual understanding not seen in the prior research on low-context cultures. In addition, individuals from a more collectivistic and high-context culture may place greater value on benchmarks other than efficiency, such as social or process-oriented goals.

In contrast to the sizeable body of research on the effects of media on conversational grounding, relatively little work has addressed goals in mediated communication other than efficiency. For users from relationship-oriented, high context cultures, efficiency may not be the best marker of communicative success.

Even when an experimenter has defined an experimental task as fairly unequivocal, it may not be perceived as such by participants from high context cultures. As my own (2009) studies showed, for individuals from high context, relationship-oriented cultures, participants may place greater importance on goals such as relationship creation/management and face

management (e.g., Holtgraves, 1997; Ting Toomey, 2005) than their fellow participants from low context, task-oriented cultures. Because goals differ across cultural groups, it is inadequate to judge the usefulness of a media solely on the basis of how quickly the task-based aspect of the communication can take place. Rather, communicative needs can vary, and that the value of affordances will vary along with those goals.

Consistent with Reinig and Mejias' (2003) work, I found (Setlock, Fussell & Neuwirth, 2004) that Chinese pairs experienced lower levels of satisfaction when communicating without visual awareness. Although this did not significantly impact upon their task completion or efficiency in my experiment, it is worth considering the long-term collaboration implications where the media is significantly more socially fulfilling for one group than another. For example, Q. Zhang (2006) has found differences between media in terms of how well they support trust development in American versus Chinese dyads. My experimental task (ranking items in a Survival Task) could be completed with more or less personal investment. Although my Chinese participants did interpret and act on the task in a highly social manner, the Americans did not, suggesting it was not inherently and necessarily a social task. In a task requiring more social involvement, participants may need to rely more on the social cues afforded by media (even if the media does not support them in exactly the way afforded by face-to-face contact.)

In an interaction where persuasion, for instance, is an identified goal, the social context afforded by media may become more relevant. A sizeable literature on persuasion processes has shown that people are more persuaded by similar others (e.g., Bradner & Mark, 2002; Brock, 1965; Mackie, 1986). Thus, we can expect that members of same-culture teams will be more open toward their partners' suggestions and ideas than those in cross-cultural teams. Samarah et al. (2003) found a higher degree of agreement for Americans than Asians, however that score

was due to higher initial disagreement resulting in a greater change. In my studies, however, I found greater levels of persuasion in homogeneously Chinese pairings, which is consistent with D. Zhang et al.'s (2006) findings that Chinese were more willing to give into group judgments than were Americans. Some studies (e.g., Reinig & Mejias, 2003) have found main effects of both culture and medium on persuasion but no interaction between the two. Again, this may relate to the specific goals and priorities (stated and internalized) of the situation, as suggested by the context, within the participants' cultural frameworks.

It is assumed in most grounding-based research that the affordances of a medium for a given task are stable across all participants; that the affordances of Skype, for example, are the same for both sides (barring technical problems like lag, etc.) Synchronicity between all participants is not, however, specified in the original grounding theory, which states that assessments of affordances and costs are shaped by individual participants' purposes (Clark & Brennan, 1991, p. 147). Video, for instance, affords visual and auditory co-presence, whereas IM affords opportunities for reviewing and revising messages before sending them. Depending on whether the task is heavy on information exchange vs. social interaction, communicators may prefer video or IM. This distinction may occur based on variations in the task but may also, according to cultural theories, occur based on perception of the task. If one participant in an interaction sees it as primarily an informational task while another sees it as primarily social, they may not both have the same (perceived) affordances.

Cultural norms and values may also lead to greater emphasis on other kinds of affordances, such as those that promote relationship building and smooth handling of delicate social interactions (e.g., Aoki & Woodruff, 2005; Hancock, Birnholtz, Bazarova, Guillory, Perlin & Amos, 2009). For example, Hancock et al. (2009) describe how IM affords ―Butler lies, or

misstatements about one's actual whereabouts or activities in order to avoid or end social interactions while saving a partner's face. More generally, the management of face—retaining ones' own dignity and autonomy without detracting from someone else's (Brown, 1987)—can be supported more or less well by different media (e.g., Kiesler, 1988), and be deemed more or less important by members of different cultures (Holtgraves, 1997; Ting Toomey, 2005).

Given the ways in which cultures differ in terms of communication patterns and norms, it is reasonable that impression management strategies and goals would similarly differ.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY 1 - AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF PERCEIVED AFFORDANCES OF COMMON MEDIA

The goal of the first study was to understand, through in-depth interviews of participants from the U.S. and Asia, how culture shapes perceptions of the affordances of media and usage of these media in different communicative contexts. My aim was to start developing an explanatory framework that will help reconcile the seemingly inconsistent results of prior studies, particularly laboratory studies, of intercultural CMC. One critical component of this framework is to identify the kinds of affordances media have for socially-oriented vs. task-oriented goals. I expect these socially-oriented goals to vary by the cultural background of interviewees, and that these goals will shape people's perceptions of the appropriateness of technology for both functional and social needs.

Based on the expected interactions between the traits discussed in various cultural frameworks, such as high or low context, task or relationship focus, etc., I entered into this study with the following questions:

Study 1, RQ1: How are people from various cultures thinking about the perceived affordances of common communication media?

Study 1, RQ2: Does culture impact how people describe their preferences?

Study 1, RQ3: Does sharing or not sharing a culture impact communication media preferences?

Study 1, RQ3: Does the type of request impact preferred media for making the request?

Method

I interviewed 22 people (6 from the U.S., 4 from India, 4 from Korea, 7 from China) about their media preferences, and the reasons for those preferences, in a variety of situations. The differences between numbers representing each culture are due to availability, despite best efforts to recruit from the general population and international and culture-specific campus groups. Participants were asked a series of questions related to their own experience and habits with the telephone (including Skype and other audio tools), Instant Messaging, email and social networks. The interviews were transcribed and coded according to the self- identified motivation for their preferences or usage patterns. The goal of this study was to identify how people are thinking about their options, and what paradigms they use to determine the affordances of various media.

Participants

Interviewees were recruited from two American universities. All were students studying within the US, fluent in English, who interacted regularly with friends and family in their native countries. Although fluency requirements implies greater exposure to American culture, this requirement was established to ensure they were able to convey their preferences clearly in English, as opposed to individuals who may have more recently arrived in America—and therefore less acculturated—but struggling to communicate in English. All interviewees identifying as non-native English speakers had been in the US fewer than 5 years. This restriction was in order to mitigate some of the potential acculturation. Interviews took place in English because this is the language in which many intercultural collaborations take place. This particular population—foreign students in America with limited previous

experience in America—was chosen to replicate the population used in the laboratory studies we hope to clarify.

Protocol

I devised an interview protocol which first systematically asked questions about the most common (according to pretested broader options) communication media: cell phone, land line, email and IM. We also asked about other communication tools such as Skype or Facebook. Interviewees were asked whether they used the media for talking to family, friends, professional or academic communication, customer service or other business purposes, etc They provided information on where they used the media (e.g., a laptop or campus computer cluster, landline at home or cell phone on the road) as well as changes in media usage which may have been required for reasons other than preference, such as those either specific to their home country or banned or unavailable in their home country. They were then asked in an open-ended question what they liked, and what they disliked, about each medium.

After discussing each medium, interviewees were given a set of hypothetical scenarios (see Table 2). The specific scenarios were chosen to represent a variety of situational factors, such as threat to face, emotional intensity, and status and other relationship issues. They were asked what media they would use in each scenario, and why. They were also asked whether their choices of media would change depending upon how often they saw the other person. The purpose of this was to see how much they are relying on that mediated communication (whether it was primary or supplemental to the relationship.)

How would you communicate…
Needing to call off work?
An accident, death or illness to friends? (To your boss) leaving your job?
Needing help with a task or assignment?
A product complaint to a customer service representative?
A mistake a colleague has made on a collaboration?
Running late to a meeting with a peer? A professor or boss?
Catching up with a friend who lives nearby? Abroad?

Table 2. Hypothetical scenarios used in interviews.

Following the interview, participants completed a brief demographic survey. In addition to the usual demographic information (age, gender), the survey also asked for the students' nationality, self-identifying cultural group (if any), native language and self-perceived English fluency. The goal of these questions was to establish a profile of how the individual identifies him or herself, culturally, as well as whether preferences may be attributable to fluency concerns. The full interview protocol is provided in Appendix A.

Analysis

The recordings of all transcripts were professionally transcribed, to avoid any biased interpretation of not clearly intelligible utterances (particularly in the case of heavy accents, etc.) Following transcription, the transcripts were not identified by participant culture in order to avoid coder bias. All demographic information relating to the participants was retained in a separate file.

Transcripts were coded using NVivo content coding software (NVIVO) according to the following dimensions: cultural context, cultural or linguistic fluency, affordances for social interaction, or general (or unspecified) preferences. These codes were developed via a bottom-

up, open-coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), where transcripts were carefully read, and important or frequently repeated ideas and explanations were noted for further analysis.

Code	Definition
Cultural Context	Technology specific to a country or culture either in availability or usage
Fluency	Communicating in a non-native language, or navigating non-native communication customs
Affordances for Social Interaction	Ability to manage social interactions, emotional context, or social presence.
Preference	Comfort (not otherwise specified) with a tool for a particular group, situation, etc.

Table 3. Interview Coding Scheme

Cultural Context

An answer or utterance was coded as "cultural context" if the interviewee specified that his media preference in that instance was due to cultural norms or expectations (e.g., *I mean, so back in China we actually use the cell phone a lot to communicate back and forth with each other, even some of the academic things. And here, things-- people like to use the email to communicate more than back in China*), culture-specific communication tools (e.g., Korean "NateOn" instance messaging client), or cultural factors related to usability (e.g., ability to type in Chinese in one IM client versus another). In this case "cultural context" was used to refer to the context surrounding a given media within a culture. This is not to be confused with a "high context" culture.

Fluency

A comment was coded as "fluency" if the interviewee specified actual difficulties with second language use (e.g., Being English as a second language person, sometimes people do not

feel that they can understand completely what I'm saying, so it sometimes is better for me to type in an IM and they would understand it much better), knowing foreign customs and norms (e.g., in China, …I could easily go to their office… [b]ecause they only have one or two students at a time. But here, we have very large group [and] you don't know if professor is available or not at this time). In order to capture the element of linguistic and cultural anxiety as well as true fluency, this code was also used when participants identified fears of these misunderstandings occurring as the reason for their preferences.

Affordances for Social Interaction

The classification of Affordances for Social Interaction was used when interviewees noted how the technology impacted their ability to manage a social situation, or how that situation was altered due to the use of a technology. Affordance coding could be based on the mention of availabilities of cues (rich vs. lean), tendency for misunderstandings or ambiguity, awareness of others' environment or context or feelings of connectedness (e.g., social presence, feeling like partners are "right there").

Preference

The code of "preference" was used when interviewees mentioned either how they prefer to use a technology (e.g., prefer to use the telephone with individuals they know better) or what media they prefer to use to handle a situation (e.g., prefer to contact people they know less well using email).

Results

The results of my analysis demonstrate some themes which I believe to be valuable in understanding how people from different cultures view mediated interactions. The preferences expressed here show that while the participants do identify media as either richer or leaner, in

keeping with the accepted definitions thereof, they do not necessarily agree that richer media are preferable for ambiguous tasks. In contrast, leaner media afford better control over emotional and social content than richer media. The "leaner" media is preferred in situations where control over one's self-presentation is a priority. Control over such information may be a more important media affordance for members of some cultures than for others. Similarly, where issues of fluency or uncertainty regarding cultural norms are at play, media which are leaner may be preferred if they offer features that help with those concerns (such as the ability to revise content privately).

Cultural Context

Preferences that were based on cultural context tended to fall into a few basic categories. First was a difference, or at least a perceived difference, about the appropriate use of a technology:

> *Email is the first one that I feel some kind of culture differences. It is really informal compared to the Korean one. The Korean one is a little bit formal than the Americans. Even though we know each other, it is for a formal. In America it is-- yeah, so I thought at first, the email conversation is really formal. Then I just write papers in the way I used email. Everyone said it is very informal, so I realized that email conversation is really informal.* ***(Interviewee 1, Korean)***

In the above instance, the interviewee reflects on how email seems to be used differently in the US than in Korea. The interviewee found, through trial and error, that while email in Korea is an acceptable mode for a formal conversation, that seems not to be the case in the U.S. It is unclear from the answer whether the interviewee means that the email is written in more

formal style, or is for more formal purposes, in Korea. But for purposes of this research, the significant point is the perception of a distinction in how it is used.

This code also included differences in which technologies were appropriate to particular situations based on issues of politeness or social norms. For example, in response to a question about how to quit a job, the same Korean interviewee stated:

> *I'm going to use email. I'm not sure. In Korea, I might use face to face communication, but here I might use email. Using the email only is kind of impolite in Korea. I'll just communicate in person. Here, email doesn't seem very impolite, so I think it's going to be okay in America.* ***(Interviewee 1, Korean)***

Similarly, an Indian respondent describing how he would deal with missing work, answered:

> *How would I tell my boss? I guess, in India, I used to text the person, because I was in that situation a couple of times. So I just texted the person saying that I can't come in today. But here, maybe, I'll just send an email.* ***(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

As with the previous Korean respondent, the Indian respondent notes a disjoint between the politeness/formality of different media between their homelands and the US. This variation can be a source of anxiety, if people are mindful that there may be differences but are unsure what to do.

Another group of responses pertained to differences in patterns which were largely establish by habit, such as having an established group of speaking partners who usually use one media and another who usually use a different media. The usage patterns then developed

based on the affordances of the habituated media. For example, one Chinese interviewee elaborated as follows regarding how she chooses between different IM clients:

> *By using MSN I'm supposed to talk like more about-- because they are my friends in china, different place from where I am right now. So I will talk to them like what my life in America. But when I'm using G-Talk I will talk more like because they're my friends here. So I just talk about like, "Hey, do you know the speaker's name or the speaker in today's seminar?" "Oh, I think he's pretty cool." Like, "Johnny Lee's topic's pretty cool," and like, "<inaudible> defense is really good," and something like that. Different way.* ***(Interviewee 3, Chinese)***

Similarly, a Korean interviewee provided the following response regarding when she typically uses the telephone:

> *I mainly use it to call my parents, and in fact I don't call any other friends outside the country. I talk with people in my class, and sometimes some friends who I know from high school, like a couple of friends that came to US. I call them, just to catch up with them, or to plan something, or find out where people are, things like that. With my parents, I call them about every week, usually every week, and they call me more, about two or three times a week, because they miss me. Sometimes, if there is something hard going on, they realize and call me more often. If they are busy, they don't call me enough.* ***(Interviewee 1, Korean)***

Another group of preferences based on cultural context relates to differences in infrastructure, cost, or other logistics about given media. For example, a Chinese interviewee

had the following comment about why her use of text messaging decreased while studying in America:

> *Texting is another thing that I communicate people with. When I was in Hong Kong, I used a lot of texting. It was not as expensive as it is here, and also, everyone uses it. Maybe because I didn't get to see the bill first of all. When I'm coordinating stuff like going out, like whatever, when I was in Hong Kong, I would text multiple people at once and ask people what's going on. When I'm on my way to somewhere and getting late, then I would text people, "Hey, I'm coming slightly late," or, "Hey, where are you right now?" I would actually do it by text. However, when I'm here, it's more expensive to use, so I don't use as much. I still use once in a while, but yeah, also some people do not like getting texts, because it charges them. Some people actually block all the text incoming, so I don't use it as much any more. (**Interviewee 2, Chinese)***

Fluency

Issues related to fluency can be further divided into three basic types: language fluency, cultural fluency and fluency- based uncertainty. In the first case, the interviewee identified certain media as being more prone to misunderstandings and therefore incurring higher production costs given issues of accent or limited vocabulary. Several interviewees noted that they disliked the telephone based both on actual and perceived risk of misunderstandings. A Chinese interviewee had the following comment regarding concerns about communicating on-the-spot in English on the telephone versus using text-based technologies:

Being English as a second language person, sometimes people do not feel that they can understand completely what I'm saying, so it sometimes is better for me to type in an IM and they would understand it much better. So there are some communication issues. Other thing is, let's say if-- one of my friends really likes arguing something, like something philosophical and stuff. I'm better at organizing my thoughts when I'm writing, rather than talking, so that's another issue. I get better when it's not by phone call, but that guy really likes calling.

(Interviewee 2, Chinese.)

Similarly, a Korean interviewee provided the following response regarding why she uses the telephone with Korean friends but rarely American friends:

I didn't use the phone call often with my American friends. It might be because of my lack of fluency of English. So I use phone call with my Korean friends a lot.

(Interviewee 1, Korean)

The ability to use lip reading supplementary to hearing the non-native speaking partner may aid in understanding. It also provides an opportunity to be mindful of signals such as a confused expression which suggest the communication was not as successful as hoped. This would allow for a more fluid repair.

In the following example, a Chinese interviewee commented on one drawback to using email. In this case, the issue is more related to cultural fluency rather than linguistic fluency, since the individual is uncertain how to address the recipient. Practices vary widely for beginning emails even among native speakers, but such ambiguity may be especially unsettling for non-native speakers.

Hmm. When it's recruiting and stuff, and people like that, that I'm not very sure about, I just say, "Hi." I cannot write-- I don't like writing people's name in the email when I don't know the person. This is a kind of cultural thing. You don't refer to somebody by their name when you don't know the person. It feels uncomfortable, so I just do, "Hi. This is blah, blah, blah." If it is my friends, I don't even start with hi or anything. Maybe I just go, "Hey!" But many of the times, I just start right away. ***(Interviewee 2, Chinese)***

Other interviewees identified that there are emotional costs, as well as practical ones, that play into fluency based preferences. Interviewee 2, from China, elaborated that her concerns extend beyond whether or not the communication problems can be overcome, but also how she feels about the interaction:

More like-- also, there is some kind of shame factor. I feel-- I don't want them to not understand me. ***(Interviewee 2, Chinese)***

Being a non-native speaker is awkward. It poses a face threat to both parties: the speaker for not seeming/feeling capable, and the listener, for not understanding. Particularly in situations where the goal of face management is salient, such as within a status differential or making new friends at work, this can be intimidating and discouraging.

Affordances for Social Interaction

Unlike the cultural context and fluency issues, preferences related to affordances could apply to interviewees from any culture. Typically, the responses contained within this code dealt with the ability to use the attributes of a media to promote or control emotional or relational information. In the following example, the Indian interviewee is responding to a follow-up question for clarification on why he does not like to use the telephone for people he doesn't

know well. The answer suggests concerns about the status of the relationship at the end of the conversation. This supports our contention that multiple goals are important in media perception, including task (in this case, a job interview) and relationship/face management.

> *Yeah, face to face. Because you can never know, like, if they're listening to you or, like, what's happening with them. If they're, like, satisfied with your answer or nothing. You don't get any feedback from them on the phone. At least, it's not a helpful feedback. If I'm talking to you and, if, like, I say something and you don't seem interested, I might say something else different. But if it's on the phone, then, I don't know, like, what's happening with you.* ***(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

This view was shared by one American participant, who expressed concern that using an email as a first contact does not provide enough feedback to know where you stand with subsequent interactions.

> *I guess the- when I check my e-mail really often and other people sometimes don't so if I'm sitting there I don't- I'm not really good at estimating how long I should wait to follow up on the e-mail. Maybe they didn't check it or maybe they just- it didn't go through. I always have these concerns like the e-mail didn't go through and it's this big, important e-mail I have to send but yeah, basically that, and then also you don't really get a sense of the person when you read an e-mail so you don't really know. If you're going-- If you send an e-mail and then you go in for a meeting with them, you really don't know exactly what to expect just based on the e-mail.* ***(Interviewee 10, American)***

A number of the answers related to the ability of a media to support emotional information, such as sadness, embarrassment, offense, etc. Certain media were noted as being particularly supportive of emotional information, as conveyed via voice tone, pitch, etc. In the following example, an Indian interviewee commented on the use of telephone for meeting the social obligations of face-to-face conversations:

> *Well, the telephone is, also, like, helpful when there are few things, which you don't want to say, like, face to face. But then, you want the pitch to be known, like, or the emotions you want to express. Then, telephone is the best thing, if you can't say it face to face.* ***(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

Interestingly, interviewees' media preferences were concerned not only with conveying emotional and relational information, but also with intentionally veiling it. On several occasions, a media was preferred because it assisting in masking or neutralizing emotional cues which may be somehow upsetting to the relationship. In the following example, media preference is based on mitigating, but not eliminating, emotional information through media qualities. In this example, the same Indian interviewee is discussing why her use of Skype is fairly minimal:

> *Yeah, like, you can't be there or you don't want to be there to, like, few things. I don't want my parents, like, see me crying or nothing like that. But then, the sadness, maybe, it's okay if they know that I'm sad from my voice. But not, like, want them to, like, see me sad.* ***(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

In the following two examples, one Asian and one American, the interviewees discuss the benefits and social freedom of IM. In the first example, a Chinese interviewee discusses feelings of freedom from the usual social constraints when using text-only media:

Something good about [IM] is that… it doesn't show – you can be as emoticons or whatever, because you don't get to see the other reactions. You get to more freely express what you are thinking without caring too much about what the other person thinks. ***(Interviewee 2, Chinese)***

An American interviewee also finds benefits to reduced social cues for handling awkward conversations:

Yeah. So I would say it's almost easier- I've found lately it's kind of easier to go in to deeper discussions that are harder to do face to face via Chat or IM. ***(Interviewee 10, American)***

In this final example, an Indian interviewee is discussing her frustration trying to discuss a colleague's mistake in person. Her phrase "even face-to-face" suggests that she assumes that would be the optimal approach. However, she is considering email for the same reasons as the previous individuals – that there may be benefits to eased face management obligations in this case.

Yeah, probably. It's, like, they just don't want to accept or admit [having made a mistake.] I don't know. I don't see, like, how I can tell them, even face-to-face doesn't work. I'm not sure. Maybe, I should try an email ***(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

Preference

Interviewees cited a number of reasons why they might prefer one media to another in a given situation. One frequently echoed was the pervasiveness of the social contact into other areas of life. In the first example, this American interviewee dislikes that the phone requires a physical interruption of whatever else he was doing.

*Plus, when you're on the phone it kind of limits you from doing other stuff, which sometimes is a good thing but sometimes is down thing, like bad thing, because, you know, you have to hold it up-- unless you have one of the-- I sometimes use the earpiece thing. But I like, you know, maybe kind of-- I mean doing something if it's folding laundry or something, you know, something productive. (**Interviewee 8, American)***

This American interviewee is commenting on the constant presence of "people" (people available for chat) while he is supposed to be doing other things.

*Yeah, again, it can be really distracting, because it's so nice to see someone's face that you can lose track of time. Basically, all of these forms of communication are just other things that can be really distracting. But on the other hand, they bring people together. So it's nice. (**Interviewee 9, American)***

The common thread between these two complaints is that the media – phone and IM – interrupt the person in another setting, dividing his attention between the real environment and the social one. A related issue pertaining to interuptability was also mentioned on several occasions. For some, media which give availability indicators were preferred because they reduce the chances of unanswered overtures or badly timed interruptions (placing responsibility with the recipient to identify correctly.) In the following example, and Indian interviewee discusses the benefits of availability indicators:

*It shows me that the person is there. With phone, unless, you call them, you don't know if the person is available or not. It's the same with email, too. But the chat, you can see the green dot next to their name, saying this person is available right now. **(Interviewee 5, Indian)***

Others, such as the following Chinese respondent, indicated concern with the trustworthiness of the indicators, suggesting they may give false confidence.

> *You can catch people whenever you like. So you can see the others like who is around and who is not. And yeah. It's interesting. Yeah, you can find somebody's always there and you can try to talk to them. The things I like is you can get to know the others better, right? But the things I hate is you cannot really get to know their status because somebody's always have their status on like I'm available in green. In green, right? But they're not really in green. When you talk to them they just didn't answer and you have no idea.* ***(Interviewee 3, Chinese)***

This concern about the reliability of availability indicators was echoed by several interviewees. In some cases, they were concerned about whether it is really safe to interrupt the person. In others, they were concerned or frustrated to find that the individual did not actually respond and so was apparently not available.

Discussion

It is clear that the Asian respondents do incorporate additional considerations into their decisions about the appropriateness of or preference for various media, even when these considerations do not necessarily lead to a difference media choice than that of the Americans. This speaks to RQ1, which asks: *How are people from various cultures thinking about the perceived affordances of common communication media*, as *well* as RQ 2, which asks*: Does culture affect how people describe their preferences.* Asian interviewees gave more thought to how their media choices may affect relationships, what social norms or expectations may be involved in the choice, and the like.

This project sheds light on what types of additional affordances may be relevant to the interpretation of inter-cultural dialogue. For the Asian interviewees, both the goal of the interaction and the affordances required to achieve that goal may differ from those used by the Americans. The framework of "least effort" from grounded theory may be retained, but revised to accommodate a potentially different goal. For the Asian respondents, the best media for a situation is the one that least effortfully accomplishes a communication goal–a goal that includes a deep investment in the management of socio-emotional information.

Our data did not find that Asians had notably different media preferences than Americans. Rather, it supported the idea that Asians give more thought to the role of emotional information, both in terms of when and how to promote it and when and how to veil it. This finding fits well with cultural theories of high and low context interaction, suggesting that managing the emotional valiance and resulting social consequences (e.g., guilt, shame, concern, politeness) of the interaction is part of the context of the interaction for Asian respondents.

The variations within task, threat to face, intensity and social dynamic within existing cross-cultural CMC experimental research may explain the current lack of a coherent story, as the emotional affordances would vary widely across these factors. Further, fluency and perceived fluency with cultural norms can impact how an individual balances these dynamics, reflecting on RQ3, *Does sharing or not sharing a culture impact communication media preferences?* Asian respondents faced the additional uncertainty of operating within a foreign culture's norms regarding media use. As several interviewees mentioned, this could result in media preferences which felt "safer" whether or not that would have been their preference otherwise.

Emotional affordances, as our results show, are not always positive or negative. The desire to promote or minimize emotional information is determined by which is in the best interest of the social goals of the interaction. Research question 4 asks: *Does type of request impact preferred media?* This question can be addressed by considering that people may not be seeing "type of request" consistently. It may be that the same stated need or request involved different factors for different people, or across cultures.

Consider, for example, the conflicting results of my own 2004 work (Setlock et al., 2004) and those of Wang et al. (2009). Incorporating emotional affordances it is possible to unify these results. Chinese participants talked the most in the face-to-face condition of the Survival Task. This situation was comprised of a task which allowed for a high degree of social talk – sharing stories about potential uses of items, affirming each other's processes, etc. – and had the context to smoothly facilitate this social talk, so it was not hugely effortful. In contrast, IM made social talk more difficult, so both Chinese and American participants tended to emphasize the task and hand without putting much effort into social talk. In the brainstorming task, there was less story-telling and affirmation by the nature of the task, so social talk was not worth the effort via any medium.

The interactional goal may be seen as a combination of the task-at-hand (the experimental paradigm) and the social and face management requirements of it, with each component being weighted differently depending on the situation. The inclusion of considering emotional affordances may stretch the boundaries of the current theoretical paradigms.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY 2 - A SURVEY STUDY OF IMPOSITION VIGNETTES

In Study 1, certain topics and scenarios emerged as areas where members of different cultures (Chinese and American) were likely to perceive differences in the significance and importance of considering social and emotional affordances (and effort.) These included conversations related to meeting the needs of close friends or family, financial requests, requests for assistance regarding social capital (connections), requests for task-related assistance, and imposing on another for their time.

The study presented here is a vignette study, which is designed to explore the intersection of the appropriateness of making an imposition and the likelihood of doing so via a variety of CMC technologies. This is a departure from the majority of cross-cultural CMC work thus far, which has emphasized short-term collaborations or laboratory-based experiments with the goal of an unambiguous task. The rationale for this departure is that, in an age of increasing global corporations and long-term virtual teams, there will be more opportunities for off-task interactions. Issues such as "how to cancel a meeting with a supervisor" will come up more often, and will often have to be handled using some form of CMC. This was also suggested via my interviews as a potential pitfall, since multiple interviewees shared that they may simply not engage in an interaction, such as needing to talk about a problem, if they felt none of the options were a good choice. If, for instance, face-to-face communication felt "appropriate" but face threatening and email felt safe but potentially inappropriate (due to uncertainty about usage norms), they may simply struggle along without asking for help at all.

For this study, I chose to focus on the act of one person making an imposition on another. An imposition occurs wherever one person's goals may impact another's negatively, such as making a request of another person's resources (time, money, power, etc.) or otherwise impinging on their autonomy. This act was selected based on my interview studies, which suggested that the act of imposing was one of the most challenging interactions in terms of issues of politeness, face management and goal equivocality. The following figure demonstrates the proposed path along which individuals may decide whether to make and imposition, and how to do it, with respect to those considerations.

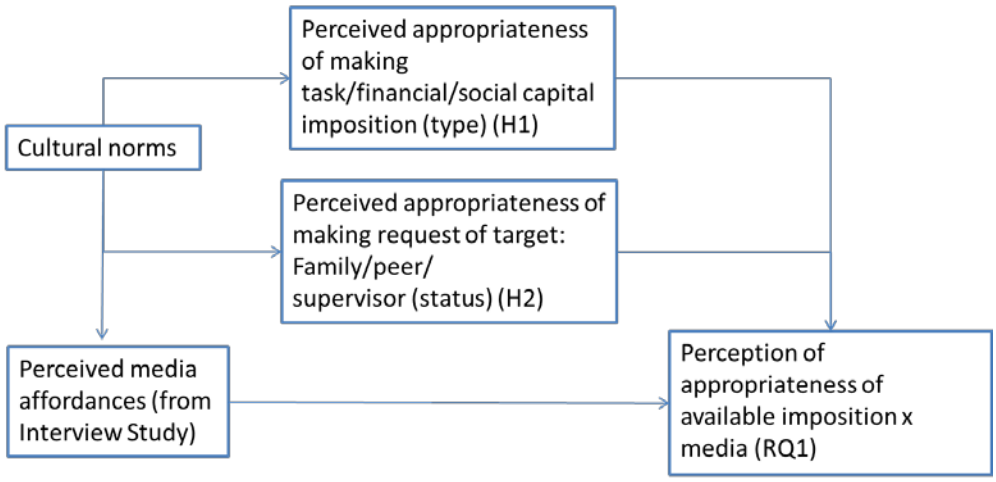

Figure 2. Decision Imposition Path

Concerns relating to one's own or a speaking partner's face are affected by media by way of availability of social cues, access to intonation, misattribution of technical or typing difficulties, etc. The nature and severity of face threats also differ along cultural lines. This is therefore a particularly important intersection for study.

Measures for this study relate to the participant's perceived appropriateness of the imposition and the participant's evaluation of the likelihood that they would make the

imposition. These two foci were chosen in order to explore the possible impact of culturally based "ideals" of communication, specifically the notion that certain conversations should be done face-to-face (based on the idea that this is most respectful) in situations where either the asker's or the asked's relational needs may be better served through mediated channels, or where complicating factors such as second-language anxiety or conflicts between communication priorities (i.e., a threat to own vs. other's face) in a low-importance or high-cost imposition make it likely the asker may simply choose not to ask at all. Thus, the appropriateness of making an imposition may conceivably be rated as "high" (it is a reasonable thing to ask) but likelihood of doing so may be low (for reasons specific to the combination of social or cultural factors.) During analysis, I found that appropriateness of asking and likelihood of asking did correlate (in the inverse) with degree of imposition, so these were averaged into the measure "imposition level."

Cultures differ in terms of individual or community-orientation, which would impact what is seen as an appropriate level of interdependence. Since different types of requests may be interpreted as more or less appropriate to make in different cultures, I hypothesize that:

> *Study 2, H1: Culture will impact perception of the appropriateness of different types of impositions - financial, social, or task-based - such that American participants will perceive of social requests as more appropriate (less of an imposition) and Asians will perceive of financial and task-based requests as more appropriate.*

Further, cultures differ in terms of whether own-face or other-face is considered of primary importance in a potentially face threatening interaction. Since making an imposition taps into both of these factors, I hypothesize that:

Study 2, H2: Culture will impact perception of the appropriateness of making an imposition on people of different status differentials, such that Asian participants will find it less appropriate to make impositions on higher status individuals.

Cultures differ in terms of the messages which are conveyed through various specific communication channels, such as the use of gaze, pause, gesture, etc. Cultures also vary in terms of how use of gaze and intonation reflects status differentials between speaking partners. When weighing whether to make an imposition, both the appropriateness of asking at all, and of asking in a particular media, are considerations. These are not independent factors, however, since other issues such as how a potentially face threatening act may be impacted by the use of mediated communication. For instance, a mediated channel may allow all parties greater privacy in choosing their self-presentation. Some may allow for more time to compose text. Mediated channels may also make it more difficult to change approaches or back off based on the absence of cues that the first approach is not well-received. Even when a mediated channel "works" well enough, it may be perceived of as impersonal or disrespectful, making it a poor choice for an imposition. Therefore, I ask:

RQ1: How does culture impact perception of the appropriateness of different media for making different types of requests?

Method

This study manipulated the specific details of the impositions, informed by the previous interviews, to explore the factors which lead to differing media preferences. In this study, participants were presented with a series of vignettes, asking them to put themselves in the position of someone making an imposition, and having an imposition made on them. The study took the form of a 2 (status: peer/higher status) x 3 design (type of request: financial requests

(financial), requests for assistance regarding connections to others (social capital), and requests for task-related assistance (task.) The details of the vignettes were based on the types of scenarios offered by participants in the interview studies, and pretested to ensure they are equally understandable and equally representative of the status differentials and topics (request types) of interest. As in the interview study, the presumed setting of the interactions was the U.S., with characters in the vignettes using American names. Although this creates a situation where the Americans are interacting in their own culture and the Asian participants are not, it reflects a reality of international students interacting in the U.S. as well as allowing for greater control of the types of relationships (given the diversity of living situations and types of relationships between U.S. and Asian countries.) Each participant ranked the media choices for 6 vignettes – 2 of each combination – yielding 396 media rankings by American participants and 258 media rankings by Chinese participants.

Participants

The participants are individuals of Chinese or American background. All participants are between 25-40 years of age, and are graduate or professional students at a local university. This age range excludes the traditional-aged undergraduates who usually participate in university research projects. I chose to focus on older students and professionals to increase the probability of participants having some opportunity to engage in intercultural and/or mediated communication of their own volition (rather than as a tightly orchestrated school assignment, such as might occur in high school or undergraduate coursework.) There were 66 American and 43 Chinese participants.

All American participants are native-born American citizens. Chinese participants are students studying within the U.S., fluent in English, who have been in the U.S. or other English-

speaking countries not more than 5 years.. Vignettes were pretested with members of this group (international students) as well as Americans to ensure the roles, such as “room mate”, and the requests were understood.

Materials

Participants were presented with a series of vignettes ranging across intersections of status (higher or peer status), imposition type (family/personal, financial, social capital, and task-related; all spheres suggested by my previous interview studies.) For example, a vignette with a peer status, task-related imposition type was:

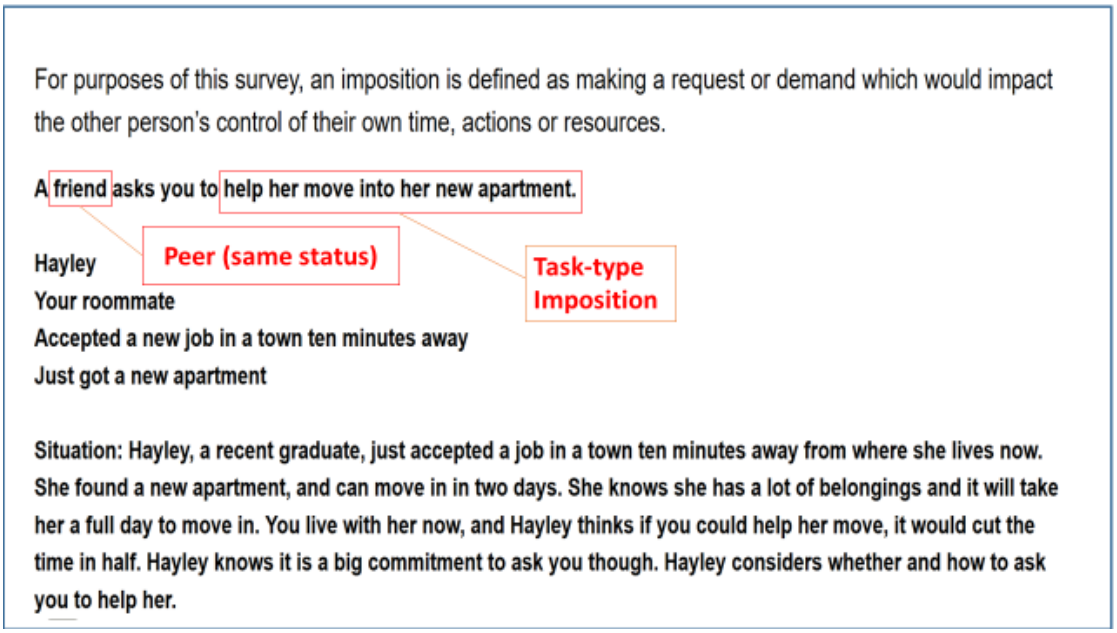

Figure 3. An example of the types of vignettes presented in Study 2. (The full survey is provided in in Appendix B)

Participants were presented with a subset of these vignettes from the perspective of the person making the imposition. The roles in the vignettes were given American names of the same generation as the participants. The vignettes were set in the U.S., as the study itself took

place in the U.S., and was informed by the challenges faced by international students studying here.

They rated the appropriateness of this vignette situation, and the likelihood they would perform the given action. They then ranked a series of communication media options in order of their preference for handling the imposition via that media.

The communication options provided were: private face-to-face, group/public face-to-face, email, text message, social media, and telephone. These were chosen, primarily, to reflect the most-popular means of communicating as described by the participants in Study 1, while defined openly enough to allow for categorization. For example, I did not specify a client for "text message," but left it open as any synchronous, text-based, generally 1:1 communication. The descriptions of the media were left open enough to specify perceived affordances within a type, such as whether the media is synchronous, is private, is recorded, etc., to evaluate whether these affordances effect the chosen means of communication in potentially face-threatening scenarios.

Results

The vignettes used in this study were constructed to reflect variations in status differentials between asker and the person being asked and type of imposition, in order to evaluate the roles these factors play in how people of different cultural groups would choose to approach such a situation. I hypothesized, based on the interview feedback in Study 1, that these characteristics would play a role in how great of imposition the request was and, relatedly, how it should approached. These results are presented in two stages. First, I will present the results related to the perceived level of imposition. Next, I will discuss the perceived appropriateness of making these requests via different media.

Level of Imposition

The first set of hypotheses relates to the extent to which an individual views a request as an imposition for the message recipient. Specifically, H1a predicted that culture would impact people's perceptions of the appropriateness of different types of impositions (financial, social-capital, task) and H1b predicted that culture would impact perception of the appropriateness of making an imposition on people of different status differentials. To test these hypotheses,. I conducted a 3 (imposition type: task-oriented, financial, social) × 2 (culture: Chinese or American/US) x 2 (status: higher or peer) Mixed Model ANOVA. The tests took into account the fact that each participant provided six sets of measures, 2 for each combination of status and type.

There was a significant main effect of imposition type (task, financial, or social) on perceived level of imposition (F [2, 494.54] = 271.35, $p < .0001$). There was also a significant main effect of status (higher or peer) on perceived level of imposition (F [1, 204.71] = 39.78, $p < .0001$) and a significant interaction between imposition type and status (F [2, 415.08] = 30.61, $p < .0001$). For financial and social impositions, asking a higher status individual was a greater imposition. For task impositions, there was no significant difference.

There was no main effect of participant cultural background (F [1, 272.88] <1, $p = .75$) but consistent with H1, there was a significant interaction between imposition type and participant culture (F [2,494.54] = 10.72, $p < .01$). As shown in Figure 4 and Table 4, Asian participants rated requests that drew on social capital or social connections as greater impositions than did American participants. Conversely, Americans rated financial requests as greater impositions than did Asians.

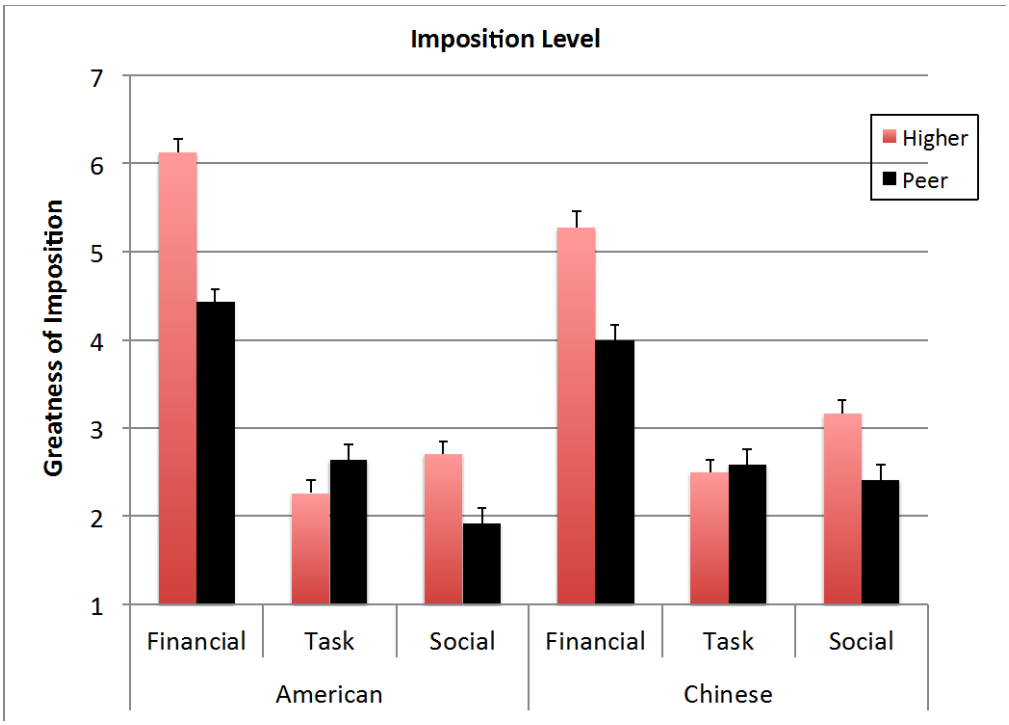

Figure 4. Level of imposition by status, culture and type

There was no significant interaction between participant cultural background and the status of the target person (F [1, 204.71] = .06, p = .81) and no significant three way interaction between culture, request type, and status of target person (F [1, 415.08] = 1.30, p = .28). Thus, H2 was not supported.

Appropriateness of Media

RQ1 asked how people from different cultures viewed making a potential imposition via certain media. Different communication media offer affordances which may be employed in making impositions, both in terms of the practical aspects of coordinating the request and the navigation of social needs such as mitigating face threats.

In order to analyze the preference results, I evaluated how often each media was chosen as the most preferred. The means of each media choice, for each type of imposition, represent what percentage of the time that media was the most preferred for that situation.

				privatef2f	groupf2f	text	email	social media	telephone
higher status	financial	American	Mean	0.94	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.00
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.00
		Chinese	Mean	0.79	0.05	0.00	0.09	0.02	0.05
			Std. Error	0.06	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.03
		Total	Mean	0.88	0.04	0.00	0.05	0.02	0.02
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01
	social capital	American	Mean	0.80	0.12	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.03
			Std. Error	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02
		Chinese	Mean	0.74	0.05	0.02	0.14	0.02	0.02
			Std. Error	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.02
		Total	Mean	0.78	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.03
			Std. Error	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02
	task	American	Mean	0.82	0.06	0.00	0.09	0.02	0.02
			Std. Error	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.02
		Chinese	Mean	0.51	0.12	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.05
			Std. Error	0.08	0.05	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.03
		Total	Mean	0.70	0.08	0.00	0.18	0.01	0.03
			Std. Error	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.02
	Total	American	Mean	0.85	0.07	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.02
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
		Chinese	Mean	0.68	0.07	0.01	0.19	0.02	0.04
			Std. Error	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02
		Total	Mean	0.79	0.07	0.01	0.10	0.01	0.02
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01
peer	financial	American	Mean	0.97	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00
			Std. Error	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00
		Chinese	Mean	0.79	0.07	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.09
			Std. Error	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.04
		Total	Mean	0.90	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.04
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02
	social capital	American	Mean	0.68	0.06	0.15	0.00	0.02	0.09
			Std. Error	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.04
		Chinese	Mean	0.56	0.05	0.21	0.09	0.00	0.09
			Std. Error	0.08	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.04
		Total	Mean	0.63	0.06	0.17	0.04	0.01	0.09
			Std. Error	0.05	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.03
	task	American	Mean	0.73	0.02	0.12	0.09	0.00	0.05
			Std. Error	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.03
		Chinese	Mean	0.58	0.09	0.12	0.07	0.09	0.05
			Std. Error	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03
		Total	Mean	0.67	0.05	0.12	0.08	0.04	0.05
			Std. Error	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
	Total	American	Mean	0.79	0.03	0.10	0.03	0.01	0.05
			Std. Error	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
		Chinese	Mean	0.64	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.08
			Std. Error	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02
		Total	Mean	0.73	0.04	0.10	0.04	0.02	0.06
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
Total	financial	American	Mean	0.95	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
		Chinese	Mean	0.79	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.07
			Std. Error	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.03
		Total	Mean	0.89	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.03
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
	social capital	American	Mean	0.74	0.09	0.08	0.02	0.01	0.06
			Std. Error	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02
		Chinese	Mean	0.65	0.05	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.06
			Std. Error	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.03
		Total	Mean	0.71	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.01	0.06
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02
	task	American	Mean	0.77	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.03
			Std. Error	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01
		Chinese	Mean	0.55	0.10	0.06	0.20	0.05	0.05
			Std. Error	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.02
		Total	Mean	0.68	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.02	0.04
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
	Total	American	Mean	0.82	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.03
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
		Chinese	Mean	0.66	0.07	0.06	0.12	0.03	0.06
			Std. Error	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01
		Total	Mean	0.76	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.04
			Std. Error	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Table 4. Means of First Choice Preference

I found that in all cases, private face-to-face communication was preferred. However, the preference for private face-to-face was more pronounced for Americans, while the Chinese participants conveyed more diversity in the preferences across the remaining media. This supports both H2, and also the conclusions of my interview study which suggest that Chinese respondents were giving more consideration to the specific affordances of the media.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of the time that each media was chosen as the most preferred way to handle the imposition, beyond face-to-face. Although members of both cultures chose face-to-face the most, Americans preferred it to a higher degree than Chinese participants. This difference in preference was true in all 6 vignettes, across all combinations of status and imposition type. Americans chose private, face-to-face communication as the most preferred method between 80% and 93% of the time in interactions with higher-status individuals and between 68% and 97% of the time in interactions with peers. Other media preferences comprised a smaller percentage of the answers, hence the 2nd (and further) choices were often far less likely to be preferred. Chinese chose private, face-to-face at between 51% and 79% with higher status people and 56% and 79% with peers. Chinese preferences were spread over more media options (fewer media never chosen first) and higher percentages were reflected in the 2nd and lower choices, showing a more diverse consideration of the options.

Because the lower choices comprised such a small portion of the answers, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about how the traits impact these lesser preferences. What can be concluded is that, as a group, the Chinese participants considered choices outside private, face-to-face with more frequency. This suggests that the Chinese participants considered each scenario based on more aspects of the social and pragmatic needs, such as how various affordances may come into play.

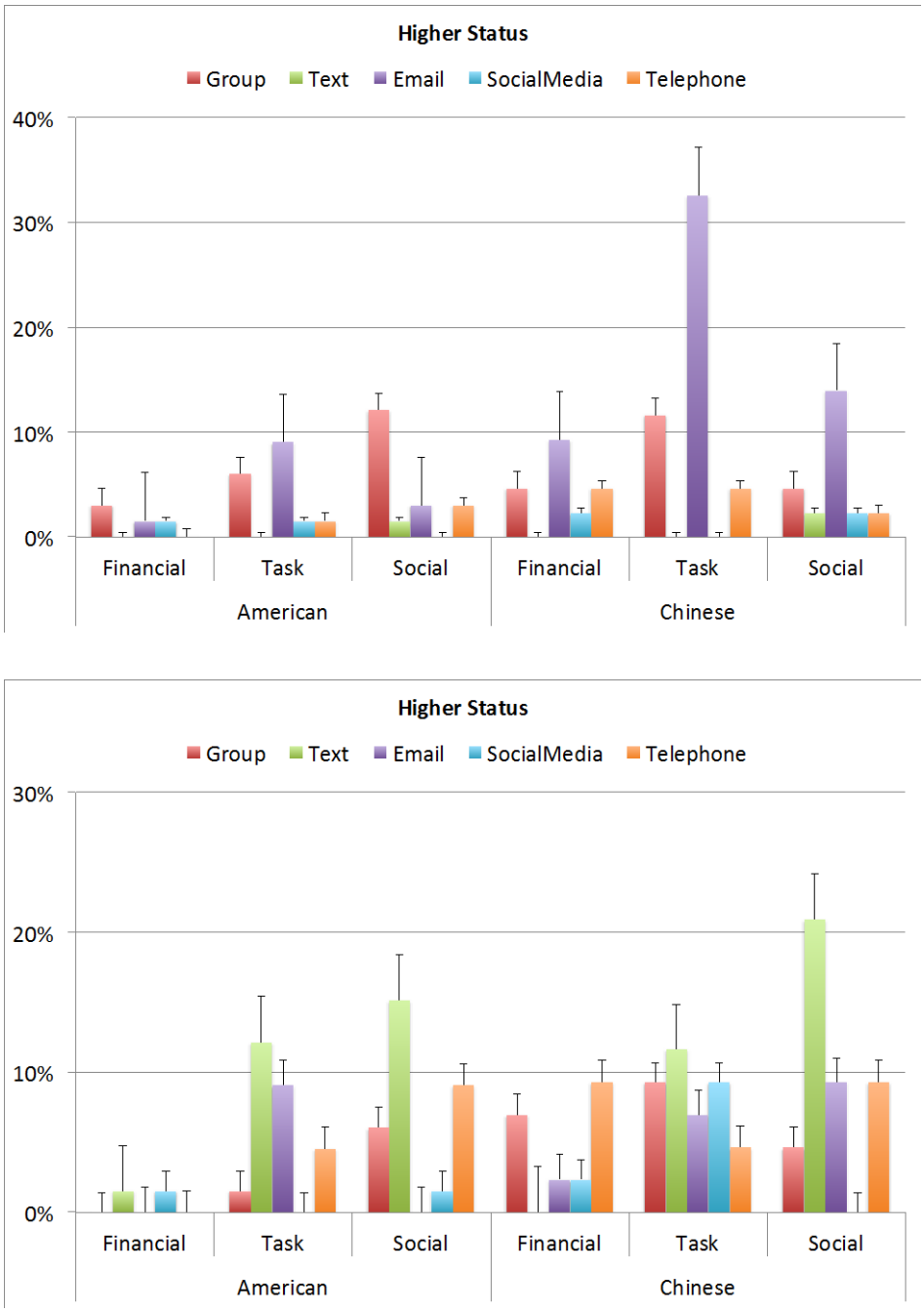

Figure 5. Distribution of highest preference for media, excluding face-to-face. Error bars represent the standard errors of the mean.

For instance, email was a fairly popular choice, after private face-to-face, which may be due to the balance of privacy (1-to-1 communication) and utilizing the veil of asynchronous, text-based communication to alleviate the face-threat of a direct (face-to-face) request of a higher

status individual. As represented in Figure 5, Chinese participants appear to utilize some means of private1-to-1 communication to a high degree, even if asynchronous. American participants, conversely, appear to give preference to the synchronous options, even if they are not private. Although further data is needed to confirm this interpretation, it suggests a difference in the weight of privacy (Chinese) and efficiency (American), when choosing between these affordances.

Discussion

The purpose of the Vignette study was explore how the impositions, as a particularly face-challenging communication situation, may be used to shed light on the complexity of cultural variability in communication media use. We found that there are differences in what people of different cultures view as notable impositions, such that Chinese view social capital and task related requests more highly while financial requests are more of an imposition for the Americans. Financial impositions were the greatest for both cultures, although higher for Americans than for Chinese. The distinction between types of impositions seems to be less of an issue for Chinese, while financial requests stand out as uncommonly challenging for Americans. It is possible that this denotes the role of money in American society as being uniquely ones' own person capital and is therefore more of a threat to the target's autonomy or, conversely, to the asker's pride.

People of all cultures found asking peers to be less imposing than asking someone of higher status. Although I hypothesized an effect of status, this result is not surprising. It may reflect on the framing of the study as a question of whether the request is "appropriate," and a societal acceptance of the meaning of boss/supervisor even in a society where the specifics of supervisee/supervisor relationships are more fluid in practice. Additionally, although the

vignettes were pretested to ensure the Asian as well as American participants understood the roles involved, it may be that in a cross-cultural setting the status differentials (or lack thereof) for these roles was not as clear. For instance, an American roommate, boss, etc. may not suggest the same nature of relationship to a person from China as a Chinese person in the same role would

A similar effect may be at play in terms of media preferences, wherein private face-to-face communication was chosen as "most appropriate" by a large margin. This may reflect societal norms as much as actual preference. Anecdotally, we are raised hearing that certain things "should be done face-to-face" throughout our lives. It is interesting that the Chinese participants, while still preferring private face-to-face communication, did diversify their preferences more than the Americans did, suggesting a less rigid adherence to this norm and a greater deliberativeness regarding what may actually meet the needs of this unique situation best. This matches the feedback acquired in the interview study. It also fits with my earlier Survival Task work, in which Chinese participants gave more deliberative thought to the value and uses of items to be ranked.

CHAPTER 6

REVISITING O'SULLIVAN'S IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT MODEL

In Study 1, I found that people are mindful of goals other than efficiency when thinking about CMC options, such as politeness and ability to save face, as well as opportunities to better manage concerns about fluency or familiarity with cultural norms. I found that, overall, Asian users gave more thought to the specific media characteristics as they would apply to social needs rather than task requirements. The results of Study 2 show that there are cultural differences in terms of which situations seem most potentially face threatening (which would suggest greater need for those socially oriented affordances in those situations.) Also, while Asian and American participants rated face-to-face as most appropriate for potentially face-threatening requests, which may reflect commonly held beliefs about politeness/propriety, Asian participants' preferences were more widely dispersed among the remaining media, confirming a more highly contextualized sense of what information to share (or not share) in various situations. Returning to O'Sullivan's original components of impression management, it is possible to outline how cultural variability may play out. Navigating potential face threats would be a prime example of the need for control over the affordances for social interaction, discussed in Study 1.

Factors influencing the perceived Locus and Valence of a Face Threat

Cultural theory has shown that cultural membership may influence the balance of factors involved in interactional control, as well as the goals thereof. Threats to self were most distinct for O'Sullivan's study, while other research including Study 1interview results, in conjunction with prior research on cultural theory, suggest that threats to partner are especially troubling for members of collectivistic cultures. In addition, the value of the context of the situation (power

dynamics, etc.) may vary between cultures, which would affect the salience of self-presentation. The same scenario may not be equally face threatening in two cultures. My finding in Study 2 that Chinese view requests relating to social capital as greater impositions while Americans view requests relating to finances as greater impositions supports this idea. In a cross-cultural pairing where a request of either of these types is occurring, one partner may see it as a significant face threat (and therefore warranting greater sensitivity and control) while the other does not see it as an especially sensitive interaction.

Threats to a speaking partner's face, especially for members of a culture which emphasizes harmony and collectivism, are never comfortable. Mediated channels may be used to ease this somewhat by reducing the salience of the interpersonal connection.

Factors influencing the Perceived Need for Interactional Control

Interactional control relates to how each participant manages his communication partners' possible responses/reactions. This can refer to content-based controls (restricting or supporting what information you have), contextual controls (situational, relational knowledge as conveyed through tone, gesture, environment, etc.) as well as your basic ability to respond (affordances for various types of response.) Interactional control is a fundamental component of impression management, since it allows for emphasizing and deemphasizing certain aspects of the communication.

Eastern cultures have been described as having a more high-context communication style than western cultures. This plays out both in terms of the context needed to communicate effectively and the use made of context available (see Matsuda 2009, Matsuda & Nisbett 2001.) The limitation of cues, such as access to tone of voice, facial expression, etc. may place constraints on Eastern communicators to a greater degree than their Western counterparts.

In Study 1, I found that individuals from different cultures did vary in terms of how well they felt various media supported their needs in this regard. For purposes of my study, this was coded as Affordances for Social Interaction. The code referred to how well the interviewees felt media allowed them to navigate difficult social spaces. Typically, the responses contained within this code dealt with the ability to use the attributes of a media to promote or control emotional or relational information. As discussed in Study 1, I found that Americans more typically felt the constraints in terms of a task-focus (how to proceed with a task) rather than an impression management goal (how to manage the relationship.) Understanding that, at least in some situations, restricting access to full context is a necessary affordance may be useful in supporting people engaging in face threatening interactions, particularly across cultures (where there may be concerns about fluency or familiarity with the norms.)

Factors influencing the Perceived Symbolic Meaning of an Interaction

Previous work on social influence within organizations has shown perceptions of CMC tools to be socially constructed, with members of groups sharing patterns of usage and attitudes regarding specific technologies (Fulk, 1993.) It is reasonable to suggest that such influence would extend to cultural group membership, leading to cultural patterns of beliefs about the acceptability of various tools in a given situation.

Several interviewees in my study noted that their preferences were influenced by perceptions of the norms of appropriateness surrounding various media. These often differed across cultures. Interestingly, some of the norms could be traced back to issues of pragmatics, usability or infrastructure, but had developed into assumptions about norms of appropriateness. For example, text messages are brief because of the original infrastructure regarding their creation and transmission. Being brief, they may also be seen as “less polite,” lacking the usual

hedges and mediated language. This, in turn, translated into interpretations of the symbolic meaning of a given media channel (i.e. – what does it mean that he chose to contact me this way?) Further, while participants were aware of, or at least suspected, differences in the symbolic role of media choice they were often unsure of the actual norms. So the uncertainty itself ended up playing a role in media choice (based on the desire to make a "best guess" media choice while preserving some ambiguity in case of a misstep.)

Social Skills and Culture

For purposes of the Impression Management Model, "social skills" refers to the ability to communicate well in a specific situation, including the social, normative and technical abilities. The execution of these skills in a given medium differ across time and space, as media become more (or less) pervasive in a given area. As stated earlier, in the years since O'Sullivan's study email has become far more pervasive and would be familiar and comfortable to more of the participants than in the original study.

O'Sullivan's iteration of the Impression Management Model introduces the idea that mediated channels of communication may be valuable for the restriction and regulation of information as much as for their ability to support it, and that users make mindful choices about these affordances. Culturally-based norms and behaviors intersect with the attributes of the model on many levels. Given the pervasiveness of cross-cultural computer-mediated communication, it is therefore useful to amend the model to take such intersections into account.

Limitations and Future Directions

The goal of this thesis was to use impositions to explore the intersection of face management and self presentation, culture, and communication media as a way of shedding light on the variable results of intercultural CMC research. I chose a very specific type of interaction

in order to control participants' shared understanding of the scenario. One limitation of focusing on such a specific type of interaction is that it may not be generalizable to other communicative needs. Additionally, given that face-to-face was such a highly preferred mode of communicating impositions, there were too few participants choosing other media to draw conclusions from those patterns.

Future directions may include field work, in order to extend beyond stated preferences and see how individuals do navigate between options, each with strengths and weaknesses. In a laboratory setting, it would also be interesting to explore ways in which media affordances may not have to be reciprocal, to explore how one participant might be able to retain privacy, discretely, even within a richer media.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The paradigms which guided early computer-mediated communications research, such as media richness, grounding, etc., were often employed linearly with the expectation that richer media were preferable, or at least were preferable in more equivocal situations. Advancing understanding of the intersectionality between cultural variation and media richness has called this simple linearity into question on several points: whether we agree on when a task is equivocal, particularly across cultural divides; what does it mean to strive for politeness, or face management, especially when considering threat to ones' own and/or the other party; and whether "more" is actually better (or more polite) depending on how politeness is operationalized within a culture; and what other factors.

Returning to the Imposition Decision Path model in Figure 6, we can identify some of the points where culture and interculturalism impact making imposition-making. Cultural variation was shown to impact how people perceived of media, in terms of appropriate and useful purposes in their lives. Particularly for Chinese participants, this may be due to a combination of culturally bound norms related to media and also to how their perceive of their use in a cross-cultural situation, specifically, since the vignettes assumed an American setting. Culture also played a role in determining the sorts of impositions which were more less appropriate to make, and therefore required more careful consideration of the approach.

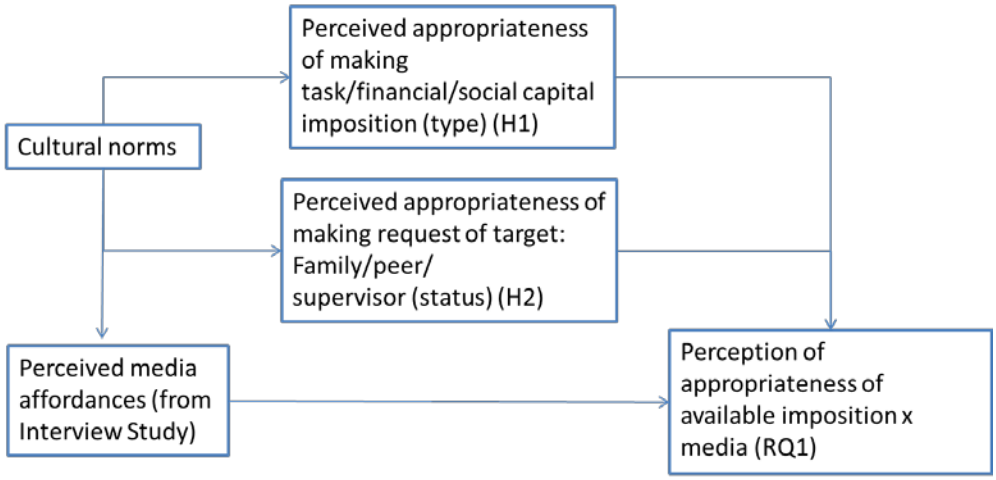

Figure 6. Imposition Decision Path (revisited)

An extension of this model would also include cultural fluency, as well as cultural norms. Cultural fluency, or the asker's knowledge of and comfort operating in a different set of norms, also played a role in how they perceived of the affordances of media, particularly in more sensitive or challenging settings such as impositions. The value of traits such as privacy and revisability seemed to be greater with less cultural fluency. In future studies, situating the impositions in a non-American culture would allow for a comparison as to how/if Americans also use media in a culture in which they are not fluent, or if this accommodation reflects an Asian cultural perspective.

In Study 1, the interview study, I found that Asian interviewees generally put more thought into the impact of their media choices on the other party, or on the relationship, such as not wanting to cause concern or to cause or experience embarrassment. When discussing what is missing is less rich media, Asian participants often articulated it in terms of the social information (how are they feeling about this?) while Americans mentioned informational concerns (how do I know if they got the message?). Study 1 also highlighted the ways in which

norms surrounding CMC practices differ between cultures, and how this can add a layer of ambiguity for non-native English speakers even when spoken and written fluency is strong.

In Study 2, the vignette study, I found that the sorts of requests which are considered to be bigger impositions varies between cultures, with requesting money to be more significant for Americans then to Chinese and requesting social connections to be more significant to Chinese than to Americans. Not completely surprisingly, face-to-face was generally deemed "most appropriate." This may be actual preference, or may be reflective of societal messages that face to face is best. Chinese participants' preference for face-to-face was less than that of Americans', with their preferences spread out more over other media. This is consistent with Study 1's feedback that Asians put more thought into the details of what might be best in each unique circumstance.

Situations which are face-threatening – to either party – in one culture may not be, or may be less so, in another, such as the differences in the extent to which financial requests are impositions to Americans. Whether a speaker is concerned more with threats to his own or to his partner's face, as a default, may also differ along cultural lines, as the American's acceptance of public modes of making request (less concerned with privacy) would indicate. Additionally, baseline expectations regarding privacy and clarity as well as norms regarding particular technologies may influence the impact of these factors in terms of media preference. In summary, while speakers from all cultures are impacted by a desire to protect and enhance their self-presentation, cultural variation may influence that weight given to the specific factors and context involved, and therefore the resulting media choice.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDY 1

[following completion of IRB/consent form] I am now going to ask you about your use of: cell phone/land line (home phone)/ email/IM/any others you use? (prompt: such as Skype? Facebook?)

Would you use this media for…

1) talking to family
2) friends
3) professional or academic communication,
4) customer service or other business purposes, etc.

How do you usually access this media? For instance, a laptop or campus computer cluster, landline at home, or cell phone?

Could you describe what they liked about using _____?

Is there anything you dislike about using _____?

I will now ask you about a series of scenarios, and would like you to tell me how you would handle each of these:

How would you communicate...

Needing to call off work?

Follow up: Would this change if you see (your boss) regularly?

An accident, death or illness to friends?

Follow up: Would this change if you see them regularly?

(To your boss) leaving your job?

Follow up: Would this change if you see (your boss) regularly?

Needing help with a task or assignment?

Follow up: Would this change if you see your professor regularly?

A product complaint to a customer service representative?

Follow up: (n/a)

A mistake a colleague has made on a collaboration?

Follow up: Would this change if you see (your boss) regularly?

Running late to a meeting with a peer? A professor or boss?

Follow up: Would this change if you see (your boss) regularly?

Catching up with a friend who lives nearby? Abroad?

Follow up: Would this change if you see (your boss) regularly?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY FOR STUDY 2

1. Informed Consent

We are asking you to participate in a research study. This form is designed to give you information about this study. We will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions.

Project Title: Mediated Impositions

Principal Investigator: Leslie Setlock
Communication
Lds87@cornell.edu

Faculty Advisor Susan R. Fussell
Communication
Srf72@cornell.edu

What the study is about
The purpose of this research is to better understand how people use computer-mediated communication technologies in their interactions with the people and scenarios they encounter on a regular basis.

What we will ask you to do
I will ask you to complete the following survey, where you will read several scenarios and answer questions about how you would respond in those scenarios.

Risks and discomforts
We anticipate that your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet. This survey is being conducted through Survey Monkey, and utilized an encrypted Survey Monkey account.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you of participating in this survey. Information from this study may benefit other people through our increased understanding of Computer-Mediated Communication technologies.

Payment for participation
Upon completion of the survey, you will be entered in a drawing for a $50 Amazon gift certificate.

Privacy/Confidentiality

We anticipate that your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

Taking part is voluntary
Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty to you, and no effect on your academic standing, record, or your relationship with the university or other organization or service that may be involved with the research.

Completion of the survey is required to be entered in the drawing for the $50 Amazon certificate.

If you have questions
The main researcher conducting this study is Leslie Setlock at Cornell University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Leslie Setlock at lds87@cornell.edu or Susan Fussell at srf72@cornell.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at 607-255-5138 or access their website at http://www.irb.cornell.edu. You may also report your concerns or complaints anonymously through Ethicspoint online at www.hotline.cornell.edu or by calling toll free at 1-866-293-3077. Ethicspoint is an independent organization that serves as a liaison between the University and the person bringing the complaint so that anonymity can be ensured.

***By typing your name you are agreeing to the terms listed above and acknowledging that participation is voluntary. Typing your full name is also necessary for students seeking course credit/credit for course absences, so the professor can be notified of your participation.**

***Please enter your email address here, in order to recieve gift certificate upon completion.**

If you are a Cornell student, please enter your NetID for the raffle. If not a Cornell student, please leave blank.

If not a Cornell student, please enter your university name here.

***Which month were you born in?**

- ◯ January
- ◯ February
- ◯ March
- ◯ April
- ◯ May
- ◯ June
- ◯ July
- ◯ August
- ◯ September
- ◯ October
- ◯ November
- ◯ December

2. Impositions (FP1) A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask to borrow $200 from a family member for a car repair.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

3. Impositions (SH1} A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask your professor to introduce you to someone who may be hiring in your chosen career.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

4. Impositions (TP1) A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask a friend to help you with something you didn't understand in class.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

5. Impositions (FH2) A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask your boss for a $150 loan for grocery money.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

6. Impositions (SP2) A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask a friend to recommend a good mechanic.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

7. Impositions (TH2) A

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask your professor to comment on a draft of a paper you wrote.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

8. Impositions (FH1)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask to borrow $200 from your supervisor for a car repair.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

9. Impositions (SP1)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask a friend to introduce you to someone who may be hiring in your career field.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

10. Impositions (TH1)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask your professor to help you with something you didn't understand in class.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

11. Impositions (FP2)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask a close friend for a $150 loan for grocery money.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

12. Impositions (SH2)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask your supervisor to recommend a good mechanic.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

13. Impositions (TP2)

For purposes of this survey, an imposition is defined as making a request or demand which would impact the other person's control of their own time, actions or resources.

You ask a friend to comment on a draft of a paper you wrote.

***Please rate the degree of imposition posed by this situation:**

not an imposition			somewhat of an imposition			large or significant imposition
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How appropriate is it to make this request in this situation?**

not at all appropriate or reasonable request			somewhat appropriate or reasonable request			very appropriate or reasonable request
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***How likely are you to make this request, of this person, in the same situation?**

not likely			somewhat likely			very likely
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***For the above situation, please rank the following media in terms of how appropriate they would be for communicating the above request? 1 is the most appropriate, 2 is the 2nd most appropriate, 3 is the 3rd most appropriate, 4 is 4th most appropriate, 5 is 5th most appropriate, and 6 is the least appropriate.**

☐	Private Face-to-Face
☐	Face-to-face in a group/public setting
☐	Telephone
☐	IM or Text Message
☐	E-Mail
☐	Social Media that others might view (i.e. Facebook)

14.

Please identify the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

***In most situations, managers should make decisions without consulting their subordinates.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***In work-related matters, managers have the right to expect obedience from their subordinates.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Employees who often question authority sometimes keep their managers from being effective.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Once a top-level executive makes a decision, people working for the company should not question it.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Employees should not express disagreements with their managers.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Managers should be able to make the right decisions without consulting with others.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Managers who let their employees participate in decisions lose power.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Employees in a company should show high respect for their managers.**

Disagree			Neutral			Agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. Demographics

Gender:

Age:

Race:

- ◯ White or European American
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Pacific Islander
- ◯ Bi-Racial
- ◯ Other

Country of Origin:

Native Language:

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